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Grenade reportedly thrown at President Bush in Tbilisi, Georgia

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New drug mix of sedative and shabu could be fatal to users, says PNP

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President Arroyo to raise VAT rate to 12% next year

■ Across / A17
Unpaid bills delay funeral of broadcaster Klein Cantoneros

Ex-coconut authority chief to run P140-B coco levy but...

By Christine O. Avendaño

A SENATOR has been named to take over the management of the P140-billion coconut levy fund, and it appears to be good news for farmers' groups.

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday announced that Danny Gonzalez would replace

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Advice for threatened newsmen: Ask NPA's help

JOURNALISTS, who get death threats but don't trust the military, could now ask the help of the communist New People's Army for their security, as chairman of the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas

mail feedback@inquirer.com.ph

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website: www.inq7.net

Publisher shot dead

Duque named new DOH chief

Critics cite his misuse of funds

By Christine O. Avendaño

FRANCISCO Duque III, the president and CEO of Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (Philhealth), was appointed yesterday to replace Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit, who resigned the other day to become a consultant of the World Health Organization.

President Macapagal-Arroyo announced Duque's appointment as health secretary even as she sought to squelch speculation that appointments in her Cabinet were a matter of political payback.

It's a comeback for a Duque at the helm of the health department. The incoming health secretary's brother and namesake served as President Diosdado Macapagal's health secretary in the '60s.

Migrante, a militant group of overseas Filipino workers, said Mr Arroyo had rewarded Duque with the health portfolio for helping one in her campaign in last year's presidential election. At least 4 million Philhealth cards bearing Mr Arroyo's photo were distributed to indigents during the presidential campaign.

"It (Cabinet reorganization) is a continuing thing," Ms Arroyo said at a press conference in Mandaluyong.

Asked about Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye's disclosure early this week that she was considering appointing one or two of her political allies who lost in the 2004 elections, Ms Arroyo replied that she was "not ready to announce those now."

"I don't subscribe to a matter of political payback. I appoint as a matter of what I need for governance, she stressed.

FULL STORY A4

ALICIA RAMOS SLAY

'It's impossible for her to be the mastermind'

By Margaux C. Ortiz, Jermaine Marcelli, Tarra V. Quismundo and Nikko Dizon

UNBELIEVABLE. Incredible.

This was how the doctor of Suzette Nicolas Bailey reacted to reports that her patient had been tapped as the mastermind in the killing of her aunt, lawmaker Teresita Ramos Nicolas.

Dr Rene Fe, a psychiatrist at the St. Claire Medical Center in Makati, immediately rushed to the National Bureau of Investigation yesterday when he learned that Cielo Bailey had been implicated to explain to authorities her real medical condition.

"It was impossible for her to be the mastermind" as she was incapable of giving orders, Fe said.

She said Bailey, a 36-year-old Tarzi's physician since 2001, could have "highly intelligent" but unfortunately has had a long history of mental illness.

FULL STORY A10

HAEDICTORY Before his three-year tour of duty ends tomorrow, US envoy Ricciardone says a manifesto on the projects of terrorism in the South Wednesday at the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines.

Ricciardone: Cotabato doormat for terrorists

By Nikko Dizon

BASED ON US intelligence, Cotabato is being used as a "doormat" for terrorists, outgoing US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone said yesterday.

Ricciardone said this as explained the US supervised of a visual project that would traverse Cotabato City and which was to be launched last month.

"Cotabato has been becoming a gateway for investment and trade, and now it's also become a doormat source. But in worst months, we've also heard that it is being used as a doormat by some killers," Ricciardone said during the Foreign Correspondents' Association of the Philippines' (Focap) press conference in Makati City.

FULL STORY A10

CRUMPLED mass of metal is all that remains of the Bynes bus which was coming down from Baguio bound for Pangasinan when it skidded off the Marcos Highway in Barlo, Tuba, Benguet, before crashing into a boulder. The Benguet police say that a faulty engine possibly caused the driver to lose control of the passenger bus.

27 killed in Benguet bus crash

By PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

TUBA, Benguet—Ismael Sotto Bada, a 60-year-old answer patient, never thought it would be his last drumbeating session in Baguio City.

He was on the way home to his family in Mangaldan, Pangasinan, when the bus he was riding in crashed into a roadside boulder along the Marcos Highway in Barangay Barlo on Tuba at 11 a.m. yesterday.

Bada and 26 other passengers were killed. Seventeen others, including three children, were hurt.

More than 20 minutes after a Jeli Baguio Bus Dagupan City, the Bynes Bus Line bus developed mechanical trouble, rammed Cadio and hit the boulder along an embankment of the highway. The broken bolted, according to the Cal. Fire of Civil Defense (OCD) in the

FULL STORY A10

Sixth RP journalist killed in 5 months

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Philip "Apet" Agustin, publisher-editor of Starline Times Recorder, took the last bus from Cabanatuan City and arrived in his hometown, Dingalan, Aurora, at about 8 p.m. Tuesday.

On that trip, he carried at least 100 copies of his newsweekly's special edition on the alleged missing funds, relief goods and logs in Dingalan, which was hit by flash floods and landslides last year that left 128 people dead and 56 missing.

Almost four hours later, Agustin, 51, was shot dead in the house of his daughter in Purok Mahogany in the coastal village of Bulala.

Agustin was the 49th Filipino journalist killed since 1986, according to records of the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines.

He was the sixth journalist slain this year after Edgar Damalerio (Feb. 2 in Negros Occ.), Arnulfo Villaseran (Feb. 28 in Nueva Ecija), Romeo Sendon (March 19 in Baguio), Marlene Esperat (March 24 in Tacurong City) and Klein Cantoneros (May 4 in Naga City).

Because of the killings, the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) said in a report on May 3 that the Philippines had become the most murderous country for journalists in 2004.

Agustin's daughter, Rosenelle Cruz, said she was working for Globe Telecom at past 11 p.m. when she received a call.

"I was sleeping then from the pm- [My father] was supposed [babies] me] in the kitchen, near the sala. After I heard the gunshots, I saw him sprawled on the floor," Cruz said.

She said she did not see the assailants of his father, a widower.

Dingalan Councilor Wenefredo Lapuz, the last local official who met Agustin that night in Quezon Street, said he was walking home by Valentown, away from the house

FULL STORY A10

184 Oakwood soldiers ordered released

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

A PLEA bargain yesterday brought to a sudden end the 17-month court-martial of 184 enlisted men who took part in the coup attempt of the Oakwood Premier Ayala Center in Makati on July 27, 2003.

The soldiers—whose ranks ranged from master sergeant (corporal)—pleaded guilty to three charges of disrespect and insubordination, and the main charge of mutiny was dropped.

After an hour-long break, the five-member military tribunal presided over by Col. Jose Sesenando issued its sentence on the soldiers: demotion by three ranks, forfeiture of two-thirds of their basic salaries for three to six months, and confinement with hard labor for a year.

But all the defense lawyers pointed out that the soldiers had been detained for a year and 10 months. Because considered without considering the other members of the tribunal "appropriate recommendation to the convening authority (Armed Forces Chief of Staff

FULL STORY A10

OAKWOOD OK. Enlisted men who participated in the 2003 rebellion staged at the Oakwood hotel in Makati City cheer when the military tribunal, which had dropped mutiny charges against them, recommended that they be freed immediately.

A1
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
THURSDAY, MAY 12, 2005

WEATHER FORECAST

Second **FRONTPAGE**

NPA disowns mayor's murder

By Norman Bordadora
and Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

ME DIDN'T do it.

That's what the Melito Glor Command of the New People's Army operating in Southern Tagalog claimed amid allegations that communist guerrillas were behind the killing of Sta. Rosa City Mayor Leon Arcillas the other day.

Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal, spokesperson of the Commission Party of the Philippines (CPP), told the Inquirer yesterday that the Melito Glor Command had denied any involvement in the broad daylight shooting of Arcillas inside City Hall.

Rosal said he spoke to Tirso Alejandro, one of the leaders of the NPA command operating in Southern Tagalog, and the latter denied that they carried out the assassination.

Rosal, however, added that he was also checking with other NPA units to determine if commission rebels were involved in the killing.

"Initial indications would show that the NPA was not involved, but I will continue to communicate with other units to know for sure," Rosal said in a telephone interview.

Rosal also declined to comment whether or not Arcillas committed "crimes against the people."

Arcillas had just finished officiating the wedding of 11 couples (not 13 as earlier reported) when he was gunned down by still unknown assailants inside the City Hall.

He was rushed to the University of Perpetual Help Hospital but expired few hours later due to a bullet that penetrated his skull. Secretary and auditor died was severely injured.

Still no suspects

Members of the task force investigating the killing said they were still collating the evidence and testimonies from witnesses.

Supt. Mario Inciso, chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group in Calabarzon, said they were now looking into the possibility that the suspects pretended to be among the couples in the civil wedding rites that Arcillas had officiated shortly before the gunmen disguised as visitors at the wedding ceremonies.

He said a resend of the civil registrar showed that there were only nine couples who registered for last Tuesday's wedding but 11 couples showed up that morning.

A check made by the bureau with the city registrar's office showed that there were only nine marriage licenses released and signed after the ceremonies.

In Manila, Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes told yesterday the police have to look into all possible angles surrounding the death of Arcillas.

"I am hereby directing the PNP to use all its resources to bring to the bar of justice all the perpetrators of this treacherous killing," Reyes said. "This dastardly act should not go unprosecuted."

Reyes said the Arcillas killing was a painful reminder that "public service entails great sacrifice and risk to their lives as upright servants] work for a just and orderly society."

GMA, help us

The family of Arcillas yesterday asked the help of President Macapagal-Arroyo for a speedy resolution of the killing.

Heading from a prepared statement for the family, widow Imelda Manzanares, the mayor's youngest daughter, said his father had been a devoted supporter of Ms Arroyo and his administration's economic programs.

"My father had been a staunch ally of the [President], both personally and [of] her programs. Our family needs your support now. May justice be served as soon as possible," Arcillas' statement said.

She added: "With the gruesome murder of our father, we ask nothing but a speedy investigation to find out who killed him and why his master minded it. I hope my father's case will not remain just a criminal statistic." With a report from Delfin Mallari, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Plunder trial makes house call

By Nelson T. Flores

JUSTICES of the Sandiganbayan 5th Division trying the plunder charges against deposed President Joseph Estrada conducted an inspection of the house and environs of Estrada's Greenhills residence that was the scene of the alleged delivery of P130 million in backpacks from tobacco excise taxes to Estrada in 1998.

But the five-member court could not get through with the in-camera tour of the alleged delivery of the cash to the detained ex-president by Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson because there was no P130 million in cash available for the exercise.

The main objective of the in-camera tour was to prove that one man was capable of carrying P130 million in cash and distribute it to a number of people in a short time.

Defense lawyer Victor Topacio told the Sandiganbayan [retiring] Filipinos had to downsized bills in that amount as such bills are intentionally designed to prevent their improper use. Topacio said other possibilities would be explored such as the SSS.

But the Sandiganbayan justices led by presiding Justice Teresita De Castro decided to push through with the inspection of Estrada's home at No. 1 Polk St., Greenhills, San Juan under the scorching summer heat.

They inspected the first level of the Estrada residence and the corner of Polk street and 19th Street where Singson said he was dropped off by Estrada's gardening every Chinese "Mong" dog when they delivered the P130 million to Estrada on Aug. 31, 1998.

The court determined that the entrance was under guard and had a concrete fence measuring more than 10 ft high and an iron gate more than 8 ft high. It was also established that the distance to the house's main gate from the corner of Buchanan St. was 304 ft, or about 11 [meters].

The inspection also established that the residence had a spacious front garage and that the garage was about the meters away from the house's main door.

Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa Ignacio said everything was exactly as Singson claimed in his testimony.

Villa-Ignacio said the tender in question proved the prosecution's claim that Singson delivered the excise tax kickbacks to Estrada and that from Estrada's portion of the gamble of Estrada's nominees, the cash, which was inside four bayong (bags made of woven palm leaves) was carried into the Estrada house.

Sandiganbayan had a different view, claiming that Singson's sworn affidavit and testimony did not jibe with what was found out during yesterday's exercise.

"Singson was lying through his teeth when he made those allegations against President Estrada," Sandiganbayan said.

LAWYERS ON CALL: Lawyers involved in the Joseph Estrada plunder trial visit the Estrada residence on Polk Street, Greenhills on an inspection. They are (from left) extra, prosecutor Dennis Villa Ignacio, defense lawyers Rene Saguisag and Jose Flaminiano and Justices Diosdado Peralta.

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GMA says she'll raise VAT to 12%

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., TJ Burgonio
and Norman Bordadora

AUTHORITY for 1...2006 is still months away, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday already made it clear that she would exercise the standby authority granted to her by Congress to raise the 10 percent value-added tax (VAT) rate to 12 percent next year.

"Let me be very clear that I will exercise the authority given to me by Congress with discretion. I will use the lever making the tough decisions (to raise the rate) in order to move the nation forward," the President said in a briefing in Malacañang.

The President made the statement in response to angry investors and creditors who have raised doubts that a final and lasting solution to the country's fiscal crisis has been reached after the bicameral conference committee reviewed the VAT rate at 10 percent.

In anticipation of a final nod to a lawsuit questioning her discretionary powers, the President expressed optimism the provision would handle all legal questions. "We have brilliant lawyers in the Senate like Senator Pimentel, Franklin Drilon, and they addressed all these issues in committee notably in the preparation of the language [of the EVAT]."

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel, Jr. said that he and six other senators will question before the Supreme Court the constitutionality of the standby authority given to the President.

The government expects to generate P285.75 billion from the VAT bill for the remaining months of the year and P 695 billion next year, including the anticipated cuts bills in 12 percent.

Although it fell short of her expectations, the President praised the approval of the VAT bill as a "victory for the nation [which is now] one step closer to economic stability." "This is the expression of the first phase of my economic reform agenda," she [President].

As the Senate, some senators yesterday looked more relaxed and apparently relieved that the VAT measure was finally ratified after weeks of fierce debates.

"Relieved, finally," a smiling Senate President Franklin Drilon said, recalling the contentious debate on the measure on the floor as well as outside. "It's a very taxing episode."

Opposition Sen. Edgardo Angara, who voted in favor of the measure along with Drilon and 11 other senators, Administration senators, said that the bill was "now a best out of the best."

"I'm very relieved. I hope the nation can now rest. GMA will have no more excuses," Sen. Sergio Osmeña said in reference.

As the House of Representatives, the House reporter on the VAT was finally ratified at 11 last night, paving the way for its signing by the President anytime now.

Pimentel believes the standby authority given the President is patently unconstitutional since it violates delegates legislative power to the Chief Executive in matters of taxation.

Pimentel said the VAT Commission delegates to the President the power to modify tariff rates, repeal and impose quotas, and other duties based on [illegible].

In this developed, Vice President Noli de Castro yesterday warned readers against unnecessary increases in the prices of basic commodities.

De Castro, who is presidential adviser on price monitoring, said the government had intensified its crackdown on unscrupulous traders who might take advantage of the situation. With a report from Cynthia D. Balana and Michael Lim Ubac

This time, Petron hikes prices first

GOING against what it had done these past few oil price increases, Petron Corp. was among the first to raise gasoline, diesel and kerosene prices by 50 centavos a liter at 12:01 a.m. today.

Eastern Petroleum Corp. increased fuel prices by the same level at 6 p.m. yesterday, while Pilipinas Shell announced [illegible] up their prices by around the same level at different times within the day.

Industry sources said this particular price hike would reflect the oil firms' costs in April.

For the past several fuel price increases, Petron had been among the last, if not always

the last to increase its prices.

In mid-April, based on Petron-issued gasoline, diesel and kerosene prices by 75 centavos a liter. Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp., Caltex (Philippines) Inc. and Total (Philippines) Corp. also followed suit, adding gas prices by 75 centavos a liter each.

Petron followed suit only two weeks later, raising fuel pump prices by 50 centavos a liter and cooking gas prices by 50 centavos per kilogram.

As a result, some Petron filling station owners complained that Petron service stations had to roll back prices by 25 centavos a liter to remain competitive.

RP protests discrimination of Filipino passengers on flights to Israel

THE PHILIPPINES has lodged a formal protest with Israel for allegedly segregating Filipino travellers at the back of aircraft on flights to Tel Aviv, the foreign department has said yesterday.

Filipinos boarding flights to Israel's main Ben Gurion International Airport are made to undergo "overly strict screening and assigned seats at the rear of the aircraft," the department said in a statement, citing a report by Manila's ambassador to Israel, Antonio Modena.

Cellular phones of Filipino workers are also confiscated, preventing them from seeking help with the Philippine consulate, it alleged.

Modena has lodged a complaint with Israel's Interior Minister Ophir Pin-Pinas, who promised he would meet with airport operators to improve the treatment of Filipinos, the statement said.

"The Philippine ambassador took exception to the segregation of incoming Filipino Tel Aviv airport passengers by personnel of Israeli airport security," it added.

The practice was in violation of an international convention on consular relations, the statement said.

There are some 30,000 Filipino workers in Israel, most of them nurses and caregivers. AFP

Distributed by Newspaper Direct

GONZALEZ

DOJ chief: Do bishops want to run country?

By Philip C. Tubeza and Franco Emman Von Cena

DO THE bishops want to run the country?

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez accused the Catholic Church of being too involved in partisan politics.

"The Church has become too intrusive. Maybe they want to run the government," Gonzalez said in an interview in the House of Representatives.

Gonzalez was commenting on the call of three Catholic bishops for a change in government and Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz's revelation that jueteng had worsened under the present administration.

When asked if the Department of Justice would file sedition charges against them, Gonzalez said: "No. Why should we? They don't have battalions."

Only if...

Gonzalez said the DOJ would formally investigate the jueteng lords on the list that Cruz submitted to Congress only if the bishop filed a formal case against them.

"We cannot have a preliminary investigation on something not filed. If the archbishop will file, we will," Gonzalez said.

"The problem is he said that his information was second-hand. He admitted that, so it's hearsay," he added.

He added that some of the people on Cruz list had been investigated before by Congress. He noted a notorious Central Luzon jueteng lord who was even invited to attend a hearing.

"The chair (of the House committee) then was (Paranaque Rep. Roilo) Golez. I was a member and we received so many threats during that time," Gonzalez said.

Loyalty checks

While admitting that he ordered state prosecutors to go on stand-by during the height of destabilization rumors, Gonzalez claimed that the administration was not monitoring its political adversaries or making loyalty checks among generals.

"Only my wife makes loyalty checks," he said.

He said the uproar over the unpopular issues of the expanded value added tax and the P2 fare hike could be minimized if the government properly presented its case to the public.

"You know these fare hikes and VAT, if you properly explain them, *wala yan* (that's nothing). All of these is about perception," Gonzalez said.

I'm strong enough, GMA tells critics

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

"I AM strong enough to withstand all this unpopularity."

This is President Macapagal-Arroyo's retort to her critics calling for the return of a "strongman leader" that would help the country steer through the worsening economic times and growing public discontent.

In a briefing in Malacañang, the President refused to comment directly on the growing clamor for a stronger leader in Malacañang in the wake of rising criminality, surging prices of goods and services, and her plunging popularity and trust ratings.

But the President disputed her critics' assertion that she was a weak leader. " I have not been remiss in making unpopular decision that are good for the country's future," the President said.

One of the unpopular decisions that the President has actively pursued is the imposition of new taxes, specifically the expansion and rate increase of the value added tax needed by her government to cure its chronic budget deficit problems and prevent the country from slipping into a a deeper crisis.

Over the last few weeks, several retired generals and Catholic bishops have lobbied for an immediate change in leadership or system due to their on-going frustration at the string of failures of the President.

The President also denied that her undisclosed meeting with Vice Admiral Ernesto de Leon and other military officers in Palawan last Monday was part of a loyalty check to assess the support of the soldiers to her administration following the aborted Labor Day coup allegedly to be launched by retired generals.

"That is a good opportunity (to meet with military officers), that is not a loyalty check," said the President. "When I go to the provinces, the area commander joins me, the head of the PNP (Philippine National Police) joins me." The President said it was also coincidental that the presidential yacht was on a test run after lengthy repairs during her trip to Palawan.

The President said there was also nothing fishy about his meeting with outgoing US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone in Palawan because they attended the launching of various fisheries-related project funded by Washington. "We also had a little social diving together," the President said.

Amid reports of a loyalty check, the Palace issued a statement declaring that the military and police "were solidly behind the duly-constituted government."

"This has been proven again and again beyond doubt. So-called loyalty checks are unnecessary and superfluous," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye in a statement.

Not yet, GMA says of Cha-cha debate

By Christine O. Avendaño

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo dismissed yesterday any talks on changing or amending the 1987 Constitution for now, saying that the agreed one-year moratorium on this kind of talks was still ongoing.

"There's a one-year moratorium. So therefore for this whole Congress, this first session of congress, there's no talk of Cha-cha," President Arroyo told reporters when asked for comment on renewed calls in the House of Representatives for her to hasten the Charter change process.

"It will be in the second session and it is part of the medium term plan that there will be a constitutional convention," the President said.

The 13th Congress is in its first regular session and this was expected to expire in July or some three months from now.

GMA: No more free dentures for soldiers

By Sil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF has spoken: stop giving free, false teeth to soldiers.

President Macapagal-Arroyo will ask her husband First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo to declare his "Bagong Sigla sa Ilalong Ngiti" project because of opposition that the distribution of free dentures to soldiers was just a cover for Malacañang's loyalty check.

"The First Gentleman has this project of false teeth for policemen, teachers and now soldiers. But if it is going to be initiated for something else, maybe I will suggest to him to discontinue it," said President Arroyo in a rare lambasting in Malacañang.

Arroyo kicked off his free dentures program seven months ago but it was only in the last few days that his philanthropic work has been the subject of much skepticism. He visited the Southern Command in Zamboanga City and the army's 105th Brigade in Basilan last weekend.

Arroyo is planning to bring his free dentures program to the next seven days in Da Pinkish Continental in Palanan and Southern Luzon. Confirmed in Luzena, which has the first batched beneficiaries that he was conducting a loyalty check in behalf of the Palaces.

The First Gentleman's visits to military camps have become more frequent especially after a group of retired generals turned up plan to overthrow the Arroyo administration to set aborted Labo Day takeover plan.

Although the President has stated she wanted the free dentures discontinued, Arroyo had been calling the soldiers lining up to fix their smiles that the free dentures were a "special gift" from their commander-in-chief who considered her troops special.

Arroyo claimed that no government funds were used in his free dentures program that has benefited an estimated 10,000 confidence individuals, but only from the military and the police but also from the ranks of government news owners, pork members and state hospital employees.

Arroyo has reportedly spent at least P4 million so far for the free dentures program, which was a spin-off from his "Bagong Mukha sa May Bakanta," a medical mission to give free surgery to mostly military personnel the First Gentleman hosts last October.

Mike quits press club of Negros

By Carla P Gomez
PhilExpat Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—First Gentleman Mike Arroyo has resigned as member of the Negros Press Club after his controversial induction last week triggered the resignation of three NPC officers who opposed it.

Arroyo called top NPC president Primo Jalosjos on Tuesday and told him that he was resigning from the club to promote peace and harmony in the organization.

"The First Gentleman told me that he was resigning from the club to promote peace and harmony in the organization. He said he will continue to provide Phil Health insurance to NPC members would remain," Jalosjos said.

Arroyo, a photo enthusiast, was inducted as NPC member on May 4 when the First Gentleman graced the oath taking of newly elected NPC officers at El Paboc Hotel.

But his induction did not sit well with some NPC officers.

Luz Alisuag Amore-Toga, NPC vice president, Jaime Espino, NPC secretary, and Liberty Cruzina, NPC director, considered their honorable resignation to the board.

They said their decision to step down was to protest over what they called "serious damage" to the integrity and honor of the club by the unwarranted induction of Arroyo as NPC member.

The three said Arroyo's induction in the club violated long established NPC rules on membership because Arroyo was not "a practicing photojournalist."

They also took offense to the speech of the First Gentleman during the induction of NPC officers where Arroyo named the Manila media for "failing to tell the truth" and for misplacing him and his family recklessly with unfounded allegations.

Second-hand information

"We have been maligned with second-hand information by the Manila media that is not true and are just valuing (gasuge)," he said in his speech.

"They do not know how to police themselves. We are giving too much power to the media," he said, as he called on the provincial media to stop those Manila evasive parts to report the truth.

But the three said that while they respected Arroyo's right to free expression, "the implication of his speech that our murdered colleagues deserved their fates was not only in unreasonable, but is reminiscent of the culture of impunity and violence that had led to this sorry state. How can we counsel him with members' duty in this club?"

Twenty-three journalists have been killed since 2001, when President Macapagal-Arroyo assumed office. He had been murdered this year alone.

In a letter sent to Jalosjos yesterday in his notice his resignation, Arroyo said, "I regret that I had been misunderstood by some members of the organization. But I would like to inform them that it was never my intention to hurt the feelings of anyone."

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, May 11, 2000
(Weekday of Easter)

1st Reading: Acts 7:55-56, 59-8:1
Gospel: John 17:20-26

Jesus looked up to heaven and prayed, "I pray not only for these but also for those who through their word will believe in me. May they all be one as you, Father, are in me and I am in you. May they be one in us, so the world may believe that you have sent me.

"I have given them the glory you have given me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. Then they shall reach perfection in unity and the world shall know that you have sent me and that I have loved them just as you loved me.

"Father, since you have given them to me, I want them to be with me where I am and see the Glory you gave me, for you loved me before the foundation of the world.

"Righteous Father, the world has not known you but I have known you, and these have known that you have sent me. As I revealed your Name to them, so will I continue to reveal it, so that the love with which you loved me may be in them and I also may be in them."

Commentary

Jesus prays for his disciples and for all those who will believe because of his disciples' preaching and Jesus—and so he prays for us and for all those who will believe because of our faithful witness to his Word. And he prays for oneness, for communion among us all, and oneness in the Trinity of Love, Son and Spirit. As God is one, so are we to be unity so that the world will know that in this communion Jesus lived to us the Father loved him. Jesus prays that we too will know his glory and share in it. Jesus has lived to reveal the Father to us and he will continue to reveal that love to his death, as to his life, so that this love that is between Jesus and the Father will be to us. Jesus' prayer is staggering, is frightening in its scope and depth and overwhelming. Jesus has prayed for us and this is what our God hopes for us. He must desire and he God made that great a reality in us, to deserve and to be holy.

Gemma Cruz-Araneta Inc., 4 Mercurio St., LP III, Phil. Veterans Avenue, Pasay City, Metro Manila, Philippines. Tel. No.: 551-7400, Fax #: 551-7426, E-mail: gcinfo@gcinfo.com.ph, Website: http://www.gcinfo.com.ph/gcinfo.htm. Gemma Cruz-Araneta Inc. is a leading consumer electronics retailer in the Philippines.

DepEd laments zero hike in education budget

By Alcuin Papa

THE DEPARTMENT of Education lamented yesterday the zero increase in their budget for 2006.

In a press conference at the department offices in Pasig City, Education Undersecretary for Administration and Finance Juan Miguel Luz said the budget ceiling for the department in 2006 will be the same as the one for 2005.

"In short, there is no growth in the budget. You can't have zero growth in the budget," Luz said.

He calculated that the DepEd must have a budget that increases between six to eight percent every year to be able to effect any reforms in the education system.

Last year, the Deped got a total budget of P112.5 billion, most of which went to the payment of teachers' salaries.

But Luz said they are meeting with officials of the Department of Budget Management (DBM) to find a way to increase the DepEd's budget.

Luz explained that the department would need a bigger budget to also address the transfer of students from private schools to public schools. He said that over the past five years, the DepEd had noticed a five percent increase in student population due to the transfer of students from private to public schools.

A total of 5.5 million students are currently in the public school system.

"To deal with the increase in student population, the shortages of classrooms, furniture, books and other facilities need to be addressed with a bigger budget," Luz said.

On the other hand, the DepEd is trying out a program that will give deserving public school students a chance to transfer to private schools with quality education.

SC: Singer owns the song

By Armand N. Nocum

THE SINGER has the final ownership of his song.

The Supreme Court yesterday stressed this point as it denied the petition of the Bayanihan Music Philippines Inc. to issue a temporary restraining order enjoining singer Jose Mari Chan from further recording and distributing two of his songs.

In an eight-page decision, the tribunal said Chan owns his musical composition titled "Can We Just Stop and Talk a While?" and "Afraid For Love to Fade."

"Unquestionably, respondent Chan, being undeniably the composer and author of the lyrics of the two songs, is protected by the mere fact alone that he is the creator thereof, conformably with Republic Act No. 8293, otherwise known as the Intellectual Property Code," the SC said.

It cited the law as saying that "Works are protected by the sole fact of their creation, irrespective of their mode or form of expression, as well as of their content, quality and purpose."

The issue stemmed from the fact that in 1973, Chan entered into a contract with Bayanihan where he assigned the recording firm "rights, interests and participation" over his two compositions.

But in 1999, allegedly without informing Bayanihan, Chan authorized BMG Records (Pilipinas) to "distribute the aforementioned musical compositions in a then recently released album of singer Lea Salonga."

This prompted Bayanihan to go to court, claiming Chan had violated the provisions of the Intellectual Property Code.

In his defense, Chan said it was "never his intention to divest himself of all his rights and interest" over his music and that Bayanihan failed to make good its obligation in the contract to "effectively advertise his musical composition for two years." He said this led to the "rescission" of the contract.

The Quezon City Regional Trial Court eventually ruled in favor of Chan, a decision affirmed by the Court of Appeals last year.

Ricciardone: Cotabato doormat for terrorists

Front page, A1

Ricciardone's three-year tour of duty in the Philippines will end on May 15.

"We think we better get a grip on what he means we need an understanding of what's going on down there and make sure that Dave will people cannot use Cotabato," he added.

For business, not bombers

Ricciardone further said: "But in this way, we don't want to build a road that three people will use in coming in and out of Cotabato. We want to build a road that hundreds and thousands people and truck drivers, tricycle drivers, and cart drivers will use to get rich and prosper. We don't want to build a road that's going to make it easier for bombers to sneak in and out in the dead of night and elude the Armed forces of the Philippines."

To identify real MILF

Ricciardone also said that Washington was still trying to "identify the real" Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

"We are still wrestling why some MILF leaders would talk about peace and development on one hand but on the other, there are others will communicating with world class murderers," he said.

Ricciardone said Washington was trying to identify those who are supporting the Jemaah Islamiyah and Abaddah Sayyaf.

Indignation rally

Cotabato City Mayor Muslimin Sema recently led an "indignation rally" against the United States as a result of the deliberation of the road project.

Mildred Pavia, Philippine Mission Director of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), had written Sema a letter informing the mayor of the project's suspension allegedly because international financiers of terrorists are reportedly passing through Cotabato City with the mayor's supposed "knowledge and support."

Yesterday, however, Ricciardone said the mayor would also be unaware of the report of activities of terrorists and their supporters.

"I think Mayor Sema does not really know, nor do I think people in Cotabato as well," Ricciardone said.

Road not canceled

The US ambassador also gave an assurance that the road project would not be cancelled.

He also praised the recent developments in the peace talks between the Arroyo administration and the MILF.

There have been unverified claims that Washington is set to include MILF leaders in its list of terrorists.

Duque new DOH chief

Front page, A1

"There are some who are qualified more whom they were not technically qualified before, but it doesn't mean that they're automatically to be appointed."

Political reality

Bought by his comment that his appointment as health secretary was a political reward, the 60-year-old Duque told Malaya reporters: "Pulitika, siyempre, ito ang mundo ng pulitika. It's a political reality."

What's important, he said, is that the people placed in such positions are qualified for the job.

In a subsequent talk with reporters, Duque said he did not consider his appointment political payback on the part of Ms Arroyo.

"I would not consider it a political accommodation. . . I think in terms of my track record, I would leave it to everyone to scrutinize what we have accomplished while we have been in the helm of Philhealth," he told reporters.

Track record

During his term as Philhealth president and CEO, Duque said he was able "to increase Philhealth's membership by 140 percent in 2004, increase the reserves of Philhealth from P29 billion to P69.5 billion with total assets of about P81.3 billion."

Duque also cited the "unprecedented" collection of premium payments by Philhealth.

"You know the whole Philhealth's have been transformed into a very efficient organization so that in 2001, the collection was only P8.7 billion, now it's up to P14.6 billion," he said.

Duque said he had been offered the top post in the health department as early as last year. It was only last month, however, when an emissary of Ms Arroyo informed him the position would be his.

HISTORY repeats itself. The father and namesake of incoming Health Secretary Francisco Duque Jr., ex-President Diosdado Macapagal's health secretary. (1964 INQUIRER PHOTO)

Duque, who was in the forefront of the campaign against tobacco in the country from the onslaught of SARS two years ago, earlier asked Ms Arroyo to appoint his successor by May 31.

Duque has been appointed one of the 17 commissioners of a WHO agency ranking senior issues related to health. He has been contracted to work for the international body for three years.

Disappointed

Migrante, however, voiced disappointment over Ms Arroyo's decision to tap Duque as Dupuy's successor.

"This is another hum-drum example of the President's political payback. Duque played an important role in her campaign [supporter in the last elections," Migrante chair Connie Bragas-Regalado said.

She said Duque was also exposed for his for the questionable transfer of the P520-million OFW Medicare Trust Fund from the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration to Philhealth in March last year.

She recalled that Duque had told the Arroyo in a 2003 memorandum that the transfer "will have a significant bearing on the 2004 elections and on the President's chance to generate health insurance to 8 million indigents by the end of 2003."

Regalado also cited Duque's revelation that Philhealth had invested at least P5.63 million in loans due to inability to bring in insurance dues.

"Something is definitely wrong with Duque if P520 million gets lost to fraudulent claims. Claims can be accessed with top-level approval. More likely, there is a syndicate lurking within Philhealth," she said.

Migrante said Ms Arroyo should stop the practice of "rewarding those responsible for an irregularity with more chances in committing bigger anomalies."

Qualifications

After graduating from the UST College of Medicine and Surgery in 1982, Duque earned a Master of Science degree in Susceptibility University in Washington. Five years later, he also took up Immunology and Scientific Training at the Department of Microbiology of the Georgetown School of Medicine from 1985 to 1988.

Duque had served as health undersecretary and permanent representative to the Philhealth board when Ms Arroyo was still the Vice President and social welfare secretary. He was also the board chair of Lyceum-Northwestern University in Dagupan City from 1995 to 2000, PDR report by Arroma Aning

Ex-coconut authority chief . . .

Front page, A1

Rolando Gales as chief executive officer of the Coconut Industry Investment Fund (CIIF). But she also said Camilo Sabio, the newly appointed chair of the Presidential Commission on Good Government, would be the officer in charge of the CIIF Holding Group in the meantime.

"When things have stabilized, Sabio will relinquish the chairmanship [to Concepcion]," Ms Arroyo said at a news conference.

Gales resigned the other day following the disclosure of the lavish perks and privileges he had been enjoying as executive VP of the CIIF.

Ms Arroyo said she had immediately accepted Gales's resignation.

Sabio said reporters that United Coconut Planters Bank (UCPB) and the PCGG would scrutinize with the investigation of Gales despite his resignation, "so that it would be fair, due process would be followed, and the law would be implemented."

In a phone interview, Concepcion said Ms Arroyo asked to offer him the position the other day. He said he accepted the offer because he could not refuse the President.

"I wasn't expecting [the offer] because I was under the impression that there was somebody else for the position," he said.

Concepcion is the first administrator of the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) under the Arroyo administration. He held the position from 2001 to 2004.

Reached by phone, Nonoy Reyesinjuan, executive director of the Philippine Peasant Institute, said many farmers' groups would be pleased by Concepcion's appointment.

"If the news is true, we wholeheartedly support [the appointment] because he's highly qualified," Reyesinjuan said. "His heart is with the coconut farmers."

Coconut man

After his stint at the PCA, Concepcion was named to the board of directors of the CIIF Oil Mills Group — his position at present.

Concepcion said he also served as a special economic adviser for UCPB-CIIF Financial Development Corp.

"So I've never left the industry after PCA," he said.

As the new CEO of the CIIF, Concepcion intends to examine the company structure, review its programs and strengthen its coordination with the Department of Agriculture, PCA and UCPB, among others.

"There is also a need to institute mechanisms for more effective farmers' participation in the formulation and implementation of programs," he said.

Before the PCA, Concepcion was a senior special assistant in the Department of Foreign Affairs, during the term of Foreign Secretary Raul Manglapus.

He worked with the DFA until 1992.

He served as a deputy administrator of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration from 1987 to 1988.

Concepcion said he owns dabbles lately in politics when he ran a senate [seat]... and lost—during the elections in 1998.

Gales should explain

Lawmakers want Gales to explain in Congress and the Ombudsman the use of the coconut levy fund for his perks as CIIF president and CEO.

"The issues is of national importance because the money used for the perks and privileges of Gales came from the coconut farmers. How much of the levy collected from coconut farmers has been diverted to these perks and privileges?" said Bayan chair Bayan Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales.

According to Rosales, Bayan-mabuhay promised that his committee would conduct an investigation next week.

On Tuesday, Representatives Lorenzo Tanada III, Rafael Nepomuceno, Percyano Alvarado, Danilo Ramos, 2nd dis trict and Edcel Lagman also filed a resolution calling for an inquiry into the loss of some P72 million from the CIIF fund.

"The [coconut levy] fund is a public fund, as declared by the Supreme Court, and is owned by millions of coconut farmers nationwide," Tanada said.

"It should not be used to pay for the voracious lifestyle of ex-supposed guardians and caretakers, especially when an economic crisis is devastating the lives of the coconut farmers and the Filipino people," he added.

Independent audit

The investigating committee led by UCPB chair Jose Ibrea has decided to select an independent audit firm to conduct a thorough study of the financial reports of the CIIF group of companies.

"The committee is now selecting among the top auditing firms including Price Waterhouse Coopers, Manunghaya, among others. That will guide us all in setting the proper perspective in this investigation. We will assist them in gathering the needed data," Ibrea said.

He reiterated that the audit of financial reports and also of related company policies would be appropriate as all government-owned and -controlled corporations were subject to austerity measures, as ordered by Malacañang.

Ibrea said Gales's resignation did not save him from facing the inquiry regarding his expenses at the CIIF.

"He said he will cooperate well with the investigation," Perez said. "He will give him the chance to do so."

He added a subpoena would be issued to Gales for the committee's next public hearing. With reports from Phillip C. Tubeza, Prince Estemo and Cirse and Christina Caylao

Imelda wants to go to China

By Nelson F Flores

MANILA, Philippines — Former first lady Imelda Marcos yesterday asked the Sandiganbayan to allow her to travel to China for medical consultation with a specialist from Shanghai.

In a two-page motion, Mrs. Marcos, through her lawyer Robert A.C. Sison, also asked the anti-graft court to reinstate her travel bond for the purpose of this travel.

Sison said Marcos wants again to consult a certain Dr. Yin, a traditional Chinese medicine expert, on her knee problem, which was earlier scheduled to be Dr. David Sweetman in London, England. He added that Dr. Yin is available on June 9 until the 24th.

According to Sison, Dr. Sweetman died and Mrs. Marcos to see a physiotherapist and undergo treatment course, which she did. But her client now is again suffering from previous knee pain, especially when slightly from a rebuke, and/or standing for a long time.

Sison, Marcos also tried alternative medicine committee in August 2009 when she was permitted to travel to China, Hong Kong, and Shanghai.

Sison said she would comply with all the conditions set by the court for her travel. He added that Marcos has executed waivers of appearances in order to ensure that the trial of cases pending against her will proceed even in her absence.

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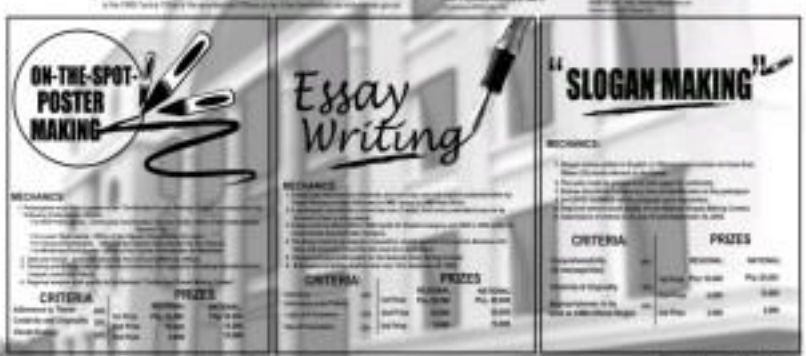

Theme : "Building a Culture of Integrity and Excellence"

27 killed in Benguet bus crash

Front page B1

Cordillera, citing initial police investigation.

That stretch of the highway is notorious for accidents, police said.

The bus was torn in half, rescue workers had to use a jackhammer to lift the wreckage and recover the bodies of more victims.

"The bus was headed for a highway conduct where it could have hurt residents. On the road, had it careened further," said Vicente Fontanos, OCD Cordillera director.

Thrown out of bus

Many of the passengers who died were thrown out of the vehicle, Fontanos said. The OCD reported that 34 people were killed in the crash site, while three others, including Biala, died in the Baguio General Hospital and Medical Center.

Biala's wife Lita said she and her daughter would have accompanied her husband to Baguio, but they decided against it to save on bus money.

"We were hoping that he would recover soon because his body was responding to the rehab treatment and chemotherapy sessions," she said.

She said Biala started treatment in Baguio for a tumor in the nasal passage on April 26.

Another fatality, SPO3 Rufino Gaspillo, officer in charge of the Tuba police substation in Barangay Ituy, was on his way to his post.

Fatalities

As of press time late night, the OCD stated, had only nine of the 39 passengers it declared to have died on the spot. They were Dindo Bulay, bus conductor, 30; Christina Mateviz, 30; Rosalina Bautista, 30; Ruben Bautista, 30; Jonathan Pinapin, 30; Jonathan Pinapin, 30; Jonathan Pinapin

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Bueno

Bomb blasts kill 64 in Iraq

TIKRIT, Iraq—At least 64 people were killed in a bloody wave of bomb blasts in Iraq Wednesday as US troops battled insurgents in the fearless resource heartland in a massive assault against Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's network.

At least four explosions in just an hour left trails of carnage in the north but in towns still Tikrit and Ramadi and in the capital Baghdad, the deadliest attacks in a mounting wave of violence accompanying the formation of Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari's government earlier this month.

At first one bomb ripped through a busy outdoor area in Saddam Hussein's hometown of Tikrit, killing 11, mostly civilians, and wounding 66, police said.

Minutes' mortal wings, missiles and disrupted rocket malls blasted the Mosul-controlled capital, an AFP reporter said. Scraps of flesh splattered shop fronts near the site of the explosion.

"This is not Jihad! Body men's. There were no US patrol, no Iraqi police at the time of the blast. This car bomb was confused," said Jalal Hamad, whose mobile telephone shop has a few meters away from the blast site.

"Most of those people were waiting here to be hired as day laborers. They are looking for jobs, just trying to feed their families," he said.

A curfew was briefly slapped on Tikrit following the blast, and mosques blared out messages calling on residents of the small Sunni town 180 km north of Baghdad to donate blood for the wounded.

In another attack, a suicide bomber wearing a belt of explosives blew himself up outside security recruitment center in the town of Hindiyah, northeast of Tikrit, killing 30 people and wounding 31, police and hospital sources said.

Many of the dead could not immediately be identified, but were believed to be young men from outlying villages who had come to join the new Iraqi army battalion of Lt. Col. Abdullah Nasser said.

Sixty-six people, mainly police recruits, were killed in a similar attack in the northern Iraqi city of Arbil on May 4.

Insurgents also detonated three car bombs in Baghdad that targeting a police station in the restive southern district of Dora killed three people, an interior ministry official said.

Nine were wounded when a car bomb later exploded at a busy road intersection in the capital's upmarket Mansur district, the official said. Another car bomb went off in a western neighborhood of the capital but there no immediate casualty figures.

Car bombs have been the weapon of choice for insurgents who have stepped up their attacks in recent weeks, killing nearly 600 people since the start of the month.

The past few days have also been among the deadliest in months for US troops, with 15 dead between Sunday and Monday.

Security sources said rebels kidnapped Retired Major Ra'ad al-Hinkal, the governor of the restive western Iraqi province of Al-Anbar where US forces are engaged in a large-scale operation to flush out insurgents.

Officials said rebels sent his car in Zarqawi's network were using the governor as a bargaining chip as US forces pressed on with "Operation Matador," one of the largest post-Saddam military operations in Iraq.

The US military said its troops were encountering unusually tough resistance.

"There are reports that those people are in ambushes, in some cases are attacking protected vans, and there's some suspicion that there's outside elements that of what we have seen with other engagements further east," US Lt. Gen. James Conway, operations director of the Joint Staff, said in Washington. AFP

GENERICS
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P 1.00

Japan considering pullout, reduction of troops in Iraq

TOKYO—After losing their hobby and hostage-taker arrest, 200 Japanese soldiers in central Iraq are lined up at a base in central Japan but weekend under the "Rising Sun" flag for what has become a familiar dilemma—the need off but troops on their mission in Iraq.

But this bunch of soldiers may be among the last.

Nearly a year and a half into its most ambitious overseas military operation since World War II, Japan is now considering whether to joins growing list of countries pulling out or scaling back their operations in Iraq in the coming months.

A pullout by Japan would be a blow for US President George W. Bush, who is struggling to keep such coalition supporters as Italy and Poland on board.

Like many coalition partners, however, the troops' fate has presented Tokyo with a difficult dilemma.

Despite the strong backing of the deployment by popular Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, public opinion remains deeply divided over whether the troops should have gone at all. Washington, meanwhile, is pushing hard for Japan's tightly constrained military to assume a more aggressive role overseas, reasoning the Iraq mission's legacy will likely boost hopes for permanent seats.

Official sources on Tuesday that the future of the deployment would not be influenced by the suspected kidnapping of a Japanese security contractor—a former paramedic with Japan's ultra—outside a US military base near Baghdad the day before.

No threats have been made against the soldiers of the Defense Force in Samawah," the southern Iraq city where the troops are based, defense chief Yoshinori Ono said. He added the Defense Agency had confirmed the safety of its soldiers.

Still, Tokyo seems to be leaning toward a speedy withdrawal.

One cold a news conference last week that the end of the year was being considered as a pullout date because that would coincide with the end of the UN mandate.

"We hope to turn over what the Self Defense Forces are doing in the Iraqi people as soon as possible," Ono said, that he said the situation will be carefully reviewed in deciding whether withdrawing to appropriate.

Tokyo would redeem other coalition troops. Ono of its plans as early as September, after withdrawing. Tokyo is expected to focus its contribution on financial aid.

If it does withdraw, Japan would be following a trend.

Italian Premier Silvio Berlusconi has said he hoped coalition forces could begin returning by [illegible] although he has said the decision would depend on the security situation and would be made in agreement with the United States and other allies.

Ukraine, the Netherlands and Spain have already begun pulling out. Poland—the fourth largest contributor of troops to the US-led coalition, with 1,700 troops—is planning on calling home its main force at the end of this year, unless the UN Security Council requires their mandate. AP

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Iraqi governor seized, hostage crisis escalates

RAMADI, Iraq—Gunmen kidnapped the top official in Iraq's rebellious Anbar province on Tuesday as the deadline neared for the capture of its other governorship passed with no word on his fate.

Raja Nimaa', who only became governor of Anbar a few days ago, was abducted with four bodyguards on the road from the town of Qaim, near the Syrian border, by the rebel stronghold of Ramadi, his brother, Ahmed Nimaa', said.

The kidnappers, supporters of the al-Qaeda leader, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, are demanding that Nimaa's wife release some of the militant leader's followers it is holding, said Nimaa's brother and a member of the Ramadi city council.

Although it appears to be a familiar tactic used by fighting elsewhere some Iraqis are putting up resistance to the spree, whose followers have kidnapped and beheaded foreigners and launched suicide bomb attacks that have killed hundreds.

US forces said they had not sanctioned an offensive launched three days ago against rebels in Anbar, citing the Fallujah-like town running from the hyperactivity in Ramadi. They said they were moving "significant resources" to the province's east.

The abduction of the Anbar governor set off a chain reaction, the complete security challenge facing Iraq's new government as it tries to bring lawless regions where Zarqawi's militants hold sway, taking on Iraqi security forces, American troops and Shias. Reuters

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US Senate approves $82-B war funds

WASHINGTON... The US military will get an infusion of money to buy urgently needed materiel for combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan under an $82 billion bill passed by the Senate on Thursday that is headed for President George W Bush's signature.

Congress completed work on the "emergency" spending bill when the Senate voted unanimously for a compromise measure following passage by the House of Representatives last week.

Senate appropriations committee chair Thad Cochran, a Mississippi Republican, said the legislation was "of utmost importance to our troops who are deployed in the war zones and for our allies in the world."

Bush praised Congress for its bipartisan support of the measure and said he was looking forward to signing it.

"I appreciate the leadership in the House and Senate for working together to reach a final agreement that focuses taxpayer dollars on providing our troops and diplomats with the tools they need," Bush said in a statement.

Congress had been under pressure from the Bush administration to promptly approve the spending bill. Without the money, the Pentagon said, it would run out of funding for some war accounts by the middle of this month.

Of the $82 billion, $75 billion would be provided to the Pentagon to help it buy ammo for soldiers and combat vehicles, ammunition, missiles and other war materiels. The money also would be used to increase death benefits for families of soldiers killed in combat.

The "emergency" spending bill also provides $107 million in relief stemming from November's Indian Ocean tsunami and distributes foreign aid to several countries.

While Democrats unanimously supported the measure, they complained that Bush had failed to give Congress long-range estimates of the cost of the Iraq war or identified ways to offset those costs.

"We should not continue to fund the war through ad hoc emergency supplemental bills that are funneled through the Congress quickly when our troops are running out of funding," said Sen. Robert Byrd, a West Virginia Democrat.

The legislation calls on the Pentagon to give Congress estimates of war costs by assessing the number of American troops that will be deployed in Iraq throughout 2006.

The Bush administration has argued that future troop costs and troop strength will depend on conditions in Iraq that are impossible to predict.

While the Pentagon said the $75 billion will cover combat operations in Iraq through Sept. 30, a few not said how much additional war funds will be needed beyond that date.

Including the newly approved money, the United States will have spent nearly $300 billion since the 2001 fighting began in Afghanistan and Iraq, about two-thirds of that was for Iraq.

Democrats also killed the latest immigration law changes attached to the bill that make it harder for foreigners to seek asylum in the United States and denies all illegal aliens driver's licenses.

The Bush administration will also get $351 million to build a new embassy in Iraq. It would be the largest US compound in the world.

The measure would provide more funding for training Iraqi security forces, which Massachusetts Democrat Sen. Edward Kennedy said "is a key element of a responsible strategy to stabilize Iraq and withdraw American forces."

Funds also would be appropriated to help Haiti with elections, to give economic assistance to Afghanistan and for more food aid for war-torn countries.

To strengthen domestic security, Congress approved funds for hiring some 22 border patrol agents and to build security fences along the US-Mexican border.

Some senators complained that the legislation did not do enough to strengthen northern border security or "save enough additional border patrol agents. Reuters

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Some 200 graduates of the nursing sc
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FREAK ACCIDENT
Emergency crews overhead to clean up the site of a mere plane collision at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, Sunday in Minneapolis.

Grenade reportedly thrown toward Bush during Georgia speech

WASHINGTON...A possible hand grenade was thrown close to US President George W. Bush on Tuesday as he gave a speech in front of tens of thousands of Georgians in Tbilisi, the US secret service said.

A Secret Service spokesperson said the agency was informed of the incident by Georgian officials.

The officials told the Secret Service the device was retrieved from the scene by an alert Georgian security officer. US news reports later said the pin had been removed from the apparent grenade, which did not explode.

"After the president departed the country of Georgia we were notified by host country authorities of a report that during the president's speech in Tbilisi a device described as a possible hand grenade was thrown within 30 meters of the stage," said Secret Service spokesperson Jonathan Cherry.

"It was reported that a device in an individual in the crowd and the device fell to the ground," Cherry said.

"It was reported that a Georgian security officer picked up the device which did not detonate and removed it from the area," he said.

Bush was speaking before tens of thousands of cheering Georgians in Tbilisi's Freedom Square when the incident occurred.

Television footage of the event showed US Secret Service agents encircling the dense crowd during Bush's speech.

NBC News, citing the Secret Service, said a Georgian officer "ran off" with the device after it was thrown and that it was "rendered safe and did not go off on its own." Citing a US official, the network said the grenade's safety pin had been removed.

"At this time we have not seen the reported device. We have agents on the ground in Tbilisi working with the FBI, state department and host country security authorities to look for [the] item that report," Cherry said.

The US leader was safely back in the United States late Tuesday after his presidential jet landed at Andrews Air Force base near Washington.

The White House did not immediately speak with reporters about the incident as the president's plane en route to Washington. AFP

Jackson defen

SANTA MARIA, Calif... Michael Jackson's watch manager revealed on Tuesday that he had asked police that the singer never slept with children.

And in what was seen as a damaging admission by a defense witness, manager Ian Mackay acknowledged that Jackson had showered special bonds with a series of boys, including his accuser and "Home Alone" star Macaulay Culkin.

Outside the Santa Maria, California court, a Jackson spokesperson said Culkin, who has declared that he was molested by the 46-year-old superstar, will testify for the defense, which began presenting its case last week.

"Yes, I do expect he will be here at some point," Jackson spokesperson Raymone Bain told reporters, adding that defense lawyers would not disclose when they would call the former child star because they "don't want to give state attorneys

...partment of a medical school hold candles as they pledge their faith in humanitarianism at their ... in China's Zhejiang province Monday. AP

...nse witness admits lying to police

...ce while could."

...ord with cross-examination ...ppeny Shelton Attorney Ge... ...Andrianos. Mueller ac... ...helped...ther on occasions ...ren...ships with children and ... ...dating a kid on Neverland ... Ranch in Santa Ba... ...d sexual abuse allegations.

...ou have any knowledge ...children sleeping in Mr. Jack... ...r could?" Andrianos asked ...& your employer.

...ing," Mueller responded, be... ...admitting to the jury that he ...ence data he had to downl... ...of the allegations in the ...ty Court of California cases. ...but now some, wasn't it?" ...ation admitted.

...ude," Mueller said.

...ence also intended that the ...ion employees had formed a ...dual bond" with eight young ...over the years, including ...ts and the now-young cancer ...

...patient as the extent of that trial.

"Mr. Jackson made so many gifts [and] bonds with some of these boys, didn't he?" Auchincloss asked.

"He just likes boys, he gives them presents," Mueller said.

Prompted by Auchincloss to name gifts only Jackson had been close, Mueller appeared to struggle before naming two, both shorts of boys who prosecutors say were targeted by the singer.

Asked whether Jackson had ever made friends aside from his nephews, Mueller again faltered, before naming actress Elizabeth Taylor and singer Lisa Marie.

"So, we're up to two?" a sarcastic Auchincloss said, prompting an objection from defense lawyer Robert Sanger.

Mueller was called as a defense witness and appeared unsettled under cross-examination, often looking to defense lawyers as he was asked to explain earlier statements.

"Are you looking at Mr. Jackson, why is that?" Auchincloss asked him at one point. An objection by Sanger prevented the witness from answering.

Mueller testified that he had spent time at Jackson's ranch but was a friend of children, Auchincloss confronted him with portions of his diaries in which naked women in bondage were also mentioned as the pornographic books during the raid.

Pressed by Auchincloss to admit that the videotapes "adult materials," Mueller backed the several materials at Jackson and instead said they were "artwork," the reality he admitted that daily were adult materials and inappropriate for children.

Jackson is charged with molesting the then-13-year-old at issue in the trial. He is being due boy made alcohol in order to show him and conspiring to hide his false imprisonment. Jackson denies the charges.

Taiwan politician rejects independence

BEIJING — A Taiwanese opposition leader on Wednesday rejected formal independence for Taiwan and called for Beijing and Taipei to make peace, saying China could dominate the coming century economically if they work together.

"Taiwan independence is a dead end," said Lien Chan in a speech at Tsinghua University, the alma mater of Chinese President Hu Jintao, whom he is to meet on Thursday.

But Young also implicitly blamed Chinese threats to attack the island that Beijing claims as its territory if it ever pursues the "separatist desire" of people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait.

Young is the second Taiwanese opposition leader to visit the mainland within a month, as part of Chinese efforts to contact activists who want Taiwan, which split with China in 1949 amid civil war, to make no independence permanent. Beijing is trying to forge ties with groups such as Young's People First Party that favor holding talks for unification.

"We should make China the world's factory center for the world and also the most prosperous market in the whole world — not a battlefield," Young said in comments that were interpreted by Beijing as opposing independence.

"This is the 'Chinese century,'" Young said. "The whole world is now waiting for the huge dragon, China, to take off ... we are Chinese people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait ... ready?"

China and Taiwan have no official relations and high-level contacts are rare.

Despite a lack of official ties, trade and tourism travel across the Taiwan Strait is booming. Taiwanese companies have invested more than $100 billion in the mainland.

Young arrived late Thursday in the ... of Wuxi and met ... Shanghai and the ... of Nanjing and Chong... before arriving in Beijing Tuesday.

He said the mainland could learn from Taiwan's economic development, which has raised annual income to $13,000-$14,000 per person.

By contrast, annual income in China's booming cities average about $1,000 per person, according to the government.

Lien Chan, head of Taiwan's main opposition group the Nationalist Party, met with Hu on April 29 in the highest-level contact between the two sides since 1949.

Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian has warned China of relying on war games to influence an upcoming Taiwanese election.

On Saturday, Taiwanese are to choose delegates in six specially-run polls on proposed reforms including whether to allow public referendums to amend the island's constitution. Beijing fears that could lead to a public vote on Taiwanese independence. AP

INQUIRER

OPINION

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EDITORIAL

End of the road?

ARCHBISHOP Oscar Cruz of Lingayen and Dagupan says he has been hearing voices lately—and they are not coming from heaven, but from his cell phone. He strongly suspects the noises and echoes are self-tale signs that his telephone conversations are being tapped.

Which may not be a such bad thing, considering that he has also been receiving death threats over both his cell phone and his land line. Maybe, the people listening in to his conversations may yet unwittingly discover the identities of those who are threatening his life. But that is presuming that those who are doing the tapping are not the same people who are making those threats. And the possibility that they are the same seems very high.

Cruz has been in the news these days with his denunciation of the unabated operations of jueteng syndicates. He claims the illegal numbers game is more widespread today than during the time of the disgraced president, Joseph Estrada. The pay-offs to police and other public officials, he says, total P13 billion yearly. He has submitted to Congress a list of 116 jueteng lords, their areas of operation and the payola they set aside for the authorities to look the other way. Reportedly on the list are five governors, one vice governor, a mayor and several individuals whose names have always been associated with jueteng for many years now.

With that kind of money, it is not difficult to comprehend why some people would threaten and even eliminate anyone who stands in the way. Thus, anyone or everyone on the list could be behind the campaign of intimidation against Cruz.

And so are those who are on the payroll of the jueteng lords. Cruz said in one television interview that some very high officials in the national government were getting about P20 million monthly from the gambling syndicates. He seems to have narrowed his suspects to those in government, saying he has "A-1 information" that the governments has facilities to tap all types of phone calls. It also has the expertise and experience, it may be added.

But why would they bother to threaten Cruz and tap his phones? The archbishop obviously doesn't seem easily to they can't expect to reconcile him with their church dignitaries at least, all they would get from spying on him are the identities of his sources.

They have very little to fear about Cruz's list. In its present form, the list has very limited value and uses. Cruz himself admits that his sources are second-hand, and that the information he and his Rizalista ng Bayan Laban sa Jueteng gathered would not stand in court. They need to be "validated" by the authorities, he has said.

For all the publicity it has generated, Cruz's crusade has been a disappointment. Getting the names of jueteng lords is not enough; regular patrons can easily rattle off their names. To be effective, to be worthy of the name, a crusade has to produce more. To say they don't have intelligence funds for gathering evidence against the operators and their protectors is a poor excuse.

Everyone in the group should have known that crushing this scourge is not going to be a walk in the park. That should have been clear from the bribery and graft cases against Estrada. Despite the eminence of Gov. Chavit Singson, the self-confessed bagman, and a host of other witnesses, despite all the documents in the government's possession, the prospect of getting a guilty verdict against Estrada seems as grim dimmer every day. So how could Cruz and his crusaders expect to advance farther with so much less?

Now the archbishop has been reduced to pleading with President Macapagal-Arroyo in order a stop to the numbers game. "If the President would directly say no to jueteng, stop jueteng, away with jueteng, then it's over," he said.

That could very well be true. But what happens if she doesn't want to displease some old supporters and political allies? What if she agrees with some police officers that payola from jueteng is needed to supplement the meager budget for police operations as well as the modest incomes of favored PNP officials? What if she ignores the call, as she seems inclined to do at the moment? Will it be end of the road for the crusade against jueteng?

Cruz seems to think so. And the jueteng lords and their patrons and protectors couldn't be happier.

Hey, big spenders

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

IN A COUNTRY of crushing needs, like the Philippines (corruption, in addition to fraud), "freedom of limited means."

Rolando Gobo of the Coconut Industry Investment Fund now grasped that truth. Sen. Edgardo Angara (then Presidential Commission on Good Government Chair Haydee Yorac) flayed him, in early Nuno-ese, for awarding privileges: "It was good that has been exposed." Gobo accepts an amnesty Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin said.

Until his "resignation," Gobo was apparently befuddled by the firestorm that his multi-million pesos perks whipped up. He was not the first official to splurge while 20 out of every 1,000 OF-bid infants have never made them first birthdays.

Other big spenders are equally confused. That includes government corporation directors, who refused to furnish auditors clipping into net income (sniff: "Why should I apologize for a godly act?" wondered Imelda Marcos, photo by the camera flash million in previous years.

Ferdinand Marcos and his cronies entered, in the name of the "New Society," levies from impoverished coconut farmers. Today's nouveau officials have their blood money with other dust. Thousands of small farmers have died without ever getting a centavo in dividends for their levies.

But Gobo and Company won't be the last of the windfall. Many "freedom" fighters turned businessmen, once church, still ignore Madonna Gandhi's counsel: "Before your wants. Produce your needs."

"We do not see Lazarus at the gate," National Economic Directors Umali notes. "The lethargy fatigue and apathy that could from malnutrition are so widespread we take them for 'normal.' Human needs do not bring them as the compassion that expresses itself in commitment."

This is blindness of the heart. "Risking millions to improve" 1 of every 4 voters' nightlights, "the old Ilagan proverb runs. There are none so blind as those who refuse to see.

It ignores even the constitutional edict which says, "The use of property bears a social function. (And all economic activity should) contribute to the common good." Such provisions exist in each ethics who often betrays on the souls. The richest 10 percent here control 36 centavos out of every peso. The poorest 10 percent make do with three centavos.

This skewed wealth buys better nutrition, extensive health services, near universal education, not to mention mistress homes, vacations abroad—for the elite. As a result, they'll live on average almost a generation longer than the poor.

No one begrudges longer life for anybody. But what rankles is the unshod "tourism luxury" that ravages. And here is Juan Tuan, still here a life-expectancy of little more than 58 years. Hard is comparable to Africa's Togoland. But in Manila and environs, the child could live to over 72 years—nearer the 79 years Canadians enjoy.

Forty-one out of 1,000 children in Bataan, Lanao Sur, Maguindanao, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi—or five malnutrition begins in Manila Hospitals—die at birth, reports Inquirer. Thank Mendoza. It is only 26 in Thailand and four in Malaysia.

These untimely deaths are preventable. But only if the resources that massively grab today are diverted. The world's richest 20 percent consume 86 percent of the world's goods. That is not a tolerable injustice. Its not big spenders' consider these facts for what they are: concession to promiscuous greed?

Thus, an israel, in Rom John Paul stressed, "a minority must learn to live with greater openness and sensitivity to the needs of their neighbors."

To its turn over blindness, scientists like the Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen and Mahbub ul Haq crafted human development indicators. They can gauge more precisely the human condition than the old yardstick of gross national product or per capita income.

Nonetheless, blindness toward neighbor nations down accountability and rides tandem with scandal indifference. Joseph Salcedo's "disdainful attitude toward the poor came out in suspended moments," his former Chief of Staff Ignacio Laquian recalls in "The Stop Tragedy: Tales from the Inside Pit.

"When accusations were made that the coconut barons had allocated smuggled sardines to the First Lady's charitable programs, Imee angrily retorted: 'My friends does not eat sardines.' ... underlying all the true sentiments of the poor as Marie Antoinette's 'Let them eat cake.'"

This contempt has seen no reformation repentance, symbolized by the cell phone. Media have shown people thin their disguised lures and savings to get a seat in the lifeboats.

This knowledge violates aspirations of immense force, since the disparity affects life itself. Hopes will boil over into demands for reform of an unjust society.

The press also documents how echoes and dins from the society or outright observation. President Macapagal-Arroyo's pan-election patronage appointments underscore this.

Service auxiliaries from bureaucratic sludge: Solaire reforms injected within discreet wealth, with Ayala Land, Inc. (ALI) and Solaire Resort Casino hit for violence. Watch the frame muscle there were even the cues low name, hoping they can dip into the lifts.

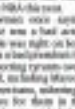
Upbraiding a criminal when most people are going hungry. Worse, profligate officials deny the impoverished people a glimpse of opportunities in dwelt by talent beyond bank balances. United Coconut Planters Bank's Jose Fenor pledges the pickle can big spenders will scrimmage. This we have to see.

Lent is not starting by way of society's wounded, as the persecuted Savior and the Lenten did, save the mind. If we persist, we will reap the wholesale.

(E-mail: juan_mercado@pacific.net.ph)

Truths

THERE'S THE RUB



Conrado de Quiros

IN A PROFESSION known for brazen, he has shown brazen. In his many ways than one.

Steve Nash was the only NBA player who made his opposition to the Iraq war known, and in a rather outspoken way. He did on in his NBA All-Star Game last year, saying "I don't like war." So War Shoot for Peace."

"I believe in going to war would be a mistake," he said. "We haven't found any nuclear weapons, no matter what anyone says—and that process is still under way. Until that's finished and decided, I don't think war is acceptable."

He hammered media wildly hearing the drums of war. "I think a lot of what we hear in the news is misleading and flat-out false, so I think it's important for us to think deeply and find out what's really going on."

He continued against knee-jerk patriotism. "I'm still trying to educate myself. And I think people should just go out and try to educate themselves and learn so they can make an informed decision."

This statements drew a strong backlash. NBA officials criticized him for saying those things in the wrong forum, causing queer with public. Former San Antonio Spurs center, David Robinson, a former naval officer said: "The time for debate is before hand. Obviously there's still questions whether this was the right thing or the wrong thing, but right now [the soldiers] are out there, 'support' em. There's plenty of time for commentary later."

Nash refused to back down. "From the start, I spoke out just because I don't want to see the loss of life. People are misunderstanding what we're being supportive. This has nothing to do with the fact that I'm from Canada. This is a much bigger issue. But now that we're in battle, I hope for as many lives to be spared as possible, [and] as little violence as possible before a resolution."

Robinson was right about one thing. History did speak on whether the war was the right thing or the wrong thing, and for more cruelty than he thought. It became patent almost immediately that it wasn't a principled war but bastardized aggression, and the real reason was not Iraqi weapons of mass destruction but Iraqi oil. Not to mention that the war was a diversion from the real war on terror, which was in Afghanistan, and which was being lost.

Now more than 10,000 Iraqis have died in the war, and more than 700 American soldiers have died. Now more than 1,000 American soldiers would lose their lives but how many innocent Iraqi children would lose theirs. Only a handful of Americans died—until much later when the Iraqis rose in revolt at the occupation and waged a war of liberation against it. Then, seeds of Iraqis died.

I wouldn't be happier that Nash was voted Most Valuable Player of the NBA this year.

I remember Paul Newman once saying about Ronald Reagan, "He was a bad actor, he'll be a bad president." He was right on both counts. At least Reagan was a bad president for the rest of the world, supporting tyrants everywhere and egging on the Iran-Iraq war. Even if he was good for Americans, ushering a period of relative affluence for them in the 1980s. The one was probably intimately linked to the other—supporting tyrants has been good for America, but that is another story. Likewise, Nash has been a great basketball player, he'll be a great person. It seems he's only getting started.

Nash went west to the Phoenix Suns last year after Dallas balked at matching the Suns' offer—$65 million over five years—and Phoenix showed every sign of being a team looking up from the cellar to one looking down from the ceiling. The Suns won a record 62 games this season, giving it home court advantage for the rest of the playoffs. It went on to beat Tim Duncan's opponent Memphis, 4-0, after everyone predicted it's last game would plummet after the regular season. Still, everyone said, that the Suns people were close to after finals the kind of money they did. It turned out to be the bargain of the year—yes, even compared to the monumental bargain Miami got with Shaquille O'Neal.

Just so he gave his fellow players a glimpse of the crash about the Iraq war, so Nash gave his fellow players a glimpse of the crash about basketball. A truth that seems to have been lost on the NBA, with all the hoopla and accolades that have surrounded its stars. True is that basketball is not won on the strength of individual talent, however rare the talent. It is won on the strength of teamwork, however shallow the bench.

Phoenix does not have exceptional players, not even in Amare Stoudemire—he's great, but he's not to me as Bryant or Shaquille O'Neal or Kevin Garnett. Largely due to Nash, who has provided its spark. He is, as his own teammates have pointed out. Loud as the fans themselves have been, and just the mere fact that he's surrounded by stars. That is that basketball is not won on the strength of individual talent, however rare the talent. It is won on the strength of teamwork, however shallow the bench.

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More wonders of Cape Town

POLITICAL TIDBITS
Bethnie Olivares-Cavanaugh

CAPE Town, South Africa—The summer weathers has been more often grey than sunny. It was clear threatening when we left Bonifay down to one of various in Bloubergstrand 15 kilometers across the other side of the Cape, although we said we'd get the best view of the the top Table Mountain, but it was so cloudy. The "tablecloth" had been spread out all over the Table, as the locals would say. Last Wednesday, however, the weather was perfect. Sunny, after breakfast, we asked to line up for the cable car that would take us to the top of the mountain. Unfortunately dozens of other people had the same idea. But the long queuing was worth it. Up there, the view of Table Mountain is spectacular. Cape Town's long stretches of white sandy coastlines, the blue Atlantic and the glistening city below. It's said that the attitude to the mountain is 1,000 feet above sea level. From the cable car station window, we could see the distance.

* * *

In the distance, we could see the mountainous savanny prison of Robben Island, Cape Town's historical. Where the imprisoned Nelson Mandela, South Africa's first democratically elected president, was imprisoned for 27 years, 18 of them in solitary confinement. Facing Table Mountain, the island is now a World Heritage site. Right for him, for a book, "Majesty Southern Africa," puts it, it was "constantly cold, stormy but almost impossible to reach."

* * *

As we went up Table Mountain by cable car, we saw up close its fantastic layering of behind various hues. Geologists believe that mountain building began in earnest in the entire Cape Peninsula almost 300 million years ago, when the African continent after the last worked, and this continent for nearly another 100 million years. They also believe that the greater mountains—one of them Table Mountain—were roughed up from the seas in a series of earthquakes. Table Mountain is also believed to have been already an isolated barrier some 60 million years ago, when the sea completely covered the Cape Flats area.

* * *

To my layman's mind, this subterranean is easier for semi millions of years to explain: Table Mountain's incredible rock-layering which, apart from its unique flat top, makes it so formidable, that this peninsula also makes the Cape Peninsula, from Cape Town all the ways to the Cape of Good Hope, home to an extraordinary number of living things, especially plants. In fact, the Cape has some 2,285 species of plants, believed to be as many as in the whole of North America and Europe combined. Of these 2,000 exist nowhere, some 1,100 are found scattered the slopes of Table Mountain. Since 1915, Prime Rhodes has stated he was one of the great botanical gardens of the world, the Kirstenbosch National Botanic Garden, on the mountain's eastern slope. Kirstenbosch is a must-visit for anyone who visits Heritage Area in South Africa. Guidebooks list it as an absolute must-to-visit.

* * *

After descending from Table Mountain, we headed for the magnificent botanical garden where sometimes-tall trees, rare South African species and manicured lawns relieve people on with picnic baskets can be found. So do students, professors and tourists. Right next to the garden, Stellenbosch serving as a magnificent backdrop and the rich foliage all around, especially across mountain species called "silver trees" whose leaves seem to shimmer in the sunlight. We discovered to our delight a signboard that said that the cuttings from these trees were planted by Sir Cecil John Rhodes. The huge trees frame a fabulous backdrop for photos and we had a great time posing. I thought, where do we find a Rhodes who can help us? Sorry, Mr. Wedding trees would cause botanical gardens!

* * *

One visit to Kirstenbosch is a good occasion to talk about Cecil John Rhodes (1853-1902), one of the great empire-builders for Britain's Queen Victoria. He served as prime minister of the Cape from 1890-1896, but he made his substantial fortune in diamond mining in Kimberley in the central part of South Africa. It is said, however, that Rhodes' greatest dream was to forge a Cape Cairo railway, to serve as a "tangible symbol of British dominion in Africa." He was the last private owner of the land where Kirstenbosch now stands—he bought it in 1895—but he is also known to present the eastern slope of Table Mountain from urban development. He also donated large tracts of land to set up the University of Cape Town. That was the kind of visionary Rhodes was. He died in 1902, and his remains are buried in the Matopos Hills in now-then Zimbabwe, formerly called Rhodesia after him. Many consider after his death, Rhodes' legacy to be a mixed bag, with the oppression of millions from all over the world have cursed the years because "Rhodes scholars" in the United Kingdom, donating them seven Presidents (formerly seven) and many Prime Ministers, and seeing how graduates from Arkansas named Bill Clinton.

* * *

Close to sunset, we drove back to Table Mountain, this time toward the western slope facing the sea. This slope features a whole series of gardens reliefs of almost equal height and size, believed to have been formed by wave motions along fault lines of ancient sea levels. The last ice age ended 10,000 ago, because there are 12 ridges lined up one after another, these were promptly labeled the "Twelve Apostles." Naturally, gradually known as since, the "Twelve Apostles" falls gold at the setting sun makes them. The gold of the mountain ridges is visible from the shores, its seaside. Sir Francis Drake, the great Elizabethan explorer, after sailing the seas, one of the Cape, was moved to say it was "the fairest cape and the most elegant thing we saw in the whole circumference of the earth."

Will Malacañang let down Aetas to favor CDC?

HUMAN FACE
Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

DIRECT the good news. Praise be to the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) for taking the side of the Aetas of Mabalacat, Pampanga, and Bamban, Tarlac, by honoring their ancestral domain claim. The Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT).

Next week, starting May 31, a week-long celebration will again be done, even as their homefulness are presenting. For after a century of struggle, they will finally be recognized as owners of their land. Indeed it was a huge victory—how the Aetas thought (once) was theirs. The Aetas are to be a cadre unfolding if their own government will be themselves.

Come, get some land from NCIP documents.

As mentioned in historical accounts, in the 1950s, during the days when forestry was the highest action in the land, namely, the use of Alsip the Aeta, was declared to hold the title to 15,000 hectares in the Sacobia area.

A Spanish document inherited from the Bureau of Archives) containing a description report corresponding to the year 1895, and the evolution of the Aetas in the area is found in the book on Page 3 of the English translation. It says that the Negritos and Bataga were nomads living on the mountains located west of Capas and Bamban.

With 1900 to 1950, during the American occupation, many areas of the Aetas were declared domain were taken as part of the 53 military camps (Fort Stotsenberg later renamed Clark Field Military Reservation). However, in manifest recognition of the rights to their lands, the Americans did not declare the Aetas' ancestral lands as forest lands within the areas taken as reservations. By 50 years, it was exclusively the Aetas who were cultivating lands within the areas taken as military camps.

As early as 1975, the Aetas of Mabalacat and Bamban were petitions for the recognition of their ancestral land claims. President Ferdinand Marcos. This land—measured some time in 1982 and 1983, when they filed a "petition for exclusion of 2,628 hectares from coverage of the Sacobia Development Authority projects for exclusive use by the Aetas of Sacobia-Ilmon." Bamban, Tarlac and Mabalacat, Pampanga. The petition was filed Association, representing municipal and barrio commissioners, Bataan, filed an application. There was no response.

The DENR approved the land claim and issued 8,102.0426 CADC 120 dated Nov. 12, 1997 over 5,131 hectares within the area of Bamban.

On Jan. 31, 1998, Romeo D. Sacdal, president and CEO of CDC wrote then Executive Secretary Alexander Aguirre requesting that the CADC 120 be declared null and void. Aguirre turned a copy Aetas Tarlac, LIBE to took into CADC 107. The CDC challenge on the basis of the ancestral domain never came to fruit settled with what the DENR had approved.

With the birth of the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act in 1997, a petition for the recognition of the Ancestral Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT) was filed by the Aetas. Processing of the petition of existing DENR (CADT) from claim holders) were done from July 2003 to April 2006. Publication of the schedule description land an extensive and map of the claim was thereafter done last year.

The petition was then found by the NCIP en banc on Dec. 6, 2006, to be valid.

On Nov. 24, 2004, the CDC misbehaved in its attempt to question the NCIP's approval of the claim and for CADT issuance.

With pressures from manufacturing, the NCIP held a dialogue on the matter among the CDC and ensured any negotiations with the CDC, under the auspices of the Department of Local Interior (DILG). The CDC wanted the ancestral domain to cover only 1,600 hectares.

Consequently, with the NCIP, CDC and DILG agreed that a revalidation of the area and the beneficiaries of the CADT shall be conducted by the three agencies. (The Gawad Sipnayan Economic Zone enjoys 1,000 hectares within the Clark Special Economic Zone.) The number of beneficiaries is 2,000.)

Aeta beneficiaries of the CADT have appealed to President Macapagal-Arroyo stating that she is to use funds for the claim of the CDC, due only 1,600 hectares within the area of the CADT. They are also opposing the revalidation of the CADT, since the period prescribed has lapsed. Under the 1998, the law provides for a 15-day period (after publication) for opposing the claim. Under the law, there is no time limit for the completion of the revalidation of the NCIP to the Court of Appeals, nor to the Office of the President or the DOJ.

Here's a summary from an NCIP document: "Said revalidation is the only way to prevent intruders in Clark's undisputed and unconcerned."

As NCIP insists and that the area covered by the Aetas' ancestral domain should first be established and then amended once said but all. And if the claim of the domain have to be used by the CDC, then a memorandum of agreement should be made by the parties concerned.

In the Visayas, the burning issue between the Aetas and private land developers in the big parts of Boracay is something to watch. More on this case another time.

Email comments to ceres@philippine.com.ph

Victory in Europe

THE LONG VIEW
Manuel L. Quezon III

On May 4, 1945, Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery of Britain accepted the surrender of the German forces in the Netherlands, northern Germany and Denmark. The German commander, Field Marshal Johannes Blaskowitz, signed the surrender document at Montgomery's headquarters on Lüneburg Heath, in Germany. The following day, Montgomery received the surrender of German forces in Norway. Montgomery's headquarters was on a tent on the

Good sense and value-laden ads

ME commend the three popular products—Coke, Jollibee and Greenwich—for pulling out their advertisements from television plugs from airing obnoxious programs on primetime.

Actually, I have always a basic claim. The schoolchildren, in their formative years, are supposed to TV shows which are worth of morality and respect for human dignity.

McCann Erickson, one of the country's top advertising agencies, has earned the people's respect for asking its clients to cancel their ad placements in the aforementioned "trash" TV shows. It was also McCann Erickson which made a study some eight years ago about children spending more time before the TV screen rather than studying their lessons and playing with their family members or friends, a social process that contributes to their well-being.

So we offer cudos to McCann Erickson, Coke, Jollibee and Greenwich, we are tempted to throw some comments at Andrew's country communications manager for saying that his company would continue placing advertisements in such talk shows, as it is not the firm's job to watch their contents. How about its moral and social responsibility to the Filipino youth?

It's time that we punished irresponsible and indecent shows as well as the advertisers that keep them going, even as we extend programs and ministrations that are responsive and value-laden.

In this regard, may we respectfully propose the giving of awards of recognition to advertisements—both in print and broadcast—which help promote particular Filipino values and virtues.

We further suggest that these awards be named Excitos Awards. Excitos means noble. And it's the noblest of virtues.

writers who come up with decent advertisements. Excitos is also an acronym for Education and Society's Counsel that rapidly Innovates and Value-laden Advertisements.

Furthermore, such awards can serve as a tribute to St. Ambrosio Excitos who advocated sanctification of work. And certainly, producing value-laden advertisements is sanctified work.

—EUSEBIO S. SAN MIGUEL
president,
Quezon City Public School Teachers Association, 22 Aranda St., Cubao, Quezon City

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Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Unappreciated

I AM a Government Service Insurance System pensioner in the City of Talisay. When I received my check for April 2005 from the GSIS Legaspi City branch, pensioner I proceeded to the Philippine National Bank, also in Legaspi City, where the pension fund was transferred from the Ilocos Bank of Legaspi.

I was surprised when I was charged a service fee of P30. Many of the pensioners who had already encashed their checks grumbled, for, indeed, why should we be charged the amount when other banks which were concerned with the funds, like the Land Bank of the Philippines and Rural Bank, also in Legaspi City where the pension fund was transferred from the Ilocos Bank of Legaspi.

I was surprised when I was charged a service fee of P30. Many of the pensioners who had already encashed their checks grumbled

Across the NATION

'Special operations' force Samar folk to flee

By Joey A. Gallo
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—Hundreds of residents in eight upland villages of Calbiga, Samar, have fled their homes following the "special operations" being conducted by armed men believed to be members of the military.

Calbiga municipal administrator Mario Cabajar said they were contemplating declaring the town under a state of calamity so the calamity funds would be released to help address the needs of the fleeing residents.

"The municipal government does not have enough funds to buy the things needed by these people. Now, if we'll place the municipality under a state of calamity, we can make use of our five percent calamity fund, which we can use to buy the things or items needed by these people," Cabajar told the reporters in a phone interview.

Cabajar said about 900 residents from eight upland villages fled their homes last Sunday to avoid the "special operations" being conducted by armed men whom they believed were military personnel.

These residents were from the upland barangays of Guinsinan, Lobang, Calabacuan, Binangpangan, Hinabang, Hubasan, Panagsulan and Tano.

They were temporarily living with their relatives at the town proper but the Calbiga municipal government under Mayor Lauro Abiada Interim pleased to open some public schools in the town proper to accommodate these residents had members to stay.

Cabajar said that based on the information they gathered from affected families, the special operation started for several days now.

"They told us that they are looking for armed. They lost for their lives," he said.

But Capt. Emmanuel Bangayan, chief of Civil Military Operations of the 8th Infantry Division based in Catbalogan, also in Samar, denied that they were conducting special operations in the upland villages.

"The members of the Philippine Army strictly follow the guidelines set by Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan (head of the 8th ID) to gain the trust and confidence of our people," he said.

"We cannot gain their trust and confidence if we will be involved in their acts as claimed by some people—," he added.

Bangayan claimed that the armed groups described by the affected residents could be members of the New People's Army who were out to destroy the military's peace and campaign to gain the confidence and trust of the people living in these communities.

"Our soldiers are trustworthy, helpful and respects the law on armies," he maintained, urging the people to return to their respective communities and assume their normal day-to-day activities.

Calbiga, 62 km from the city, is a fourth class municipality with an annual income of more than P20 million. It has more than 20,000 residents spread in 41 barangays.

It was in Calbiga where the military suffered a big setback in its anti-insurgency campaign in Eastern Visayas when six soldiers were killed in an ambush last April 9 in Barangay Canahuagan.

Diana Rigonan, campaign and advocacy officer of the Initiatives for Dialogue and Empowerment through Alternative Legal Services (IDEALS), a human rights group in Eastern Visayas, asked the military to "immediately stop this campaign," referring to the alleged harassment initiated by the government troops.

"They are only giving them people reasons to hate them and eventually join the (communist) movements... that is too much," she said.

Unpaid bills delay burial of Cantoneros

DIPOLOG CITY—Alvin Cantoneros might not be buried as scheduled because the hospital where he was treated would not issue a death certificate unless the bill for his hospitalization was settled.

Alvin Cantoneros, surnamed brother of Dipolog radio broadcaster, told the Inquirer the hospital bill amounted to about P87,000.

Alvin said it was their biggest financial worry at this point.

A death certificate is a requirement in securing a burial permit from the local civil registrar. Cantoneros' burial was set for Saturday.

"I therefore appeal for your help," Alvin said as he appealed for help.

Aside from the hospital bill, the funeral expenses for the slain broadcaster was expected to reach P40,000.

Alvin said the expenses for the wake were being side-stepped by contributions and savings from the family.

The Cantoneros family is a middle-class brood of 10 with the slain radio broadcaster as third child. Their father is already aging.

Cantoneros' colleagues from DANI-990 were also helping to raise funds.

Jeff Opilas, DANI-990 station manager, told the Inquirer the funds they raised so far have barely reached 20 percent of the hospital bills.

"Efforts are also being worked out to ask for discount, especially on the professional fees of Cantoneros' attending physicians," Opilas said.

Some media groups have also responded to the call channeled through text messages.

Iligan City-based journalist Dino dela Cruz said they will "see what we can do to help."

Although a broadcast journalist, Cantoneros was not an accredited member of the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster sa Pilipinas (KBP).

Only accredited members are entitled to a P100,000 personal accident insurance.

Those interested to offer assistance may coordinate with Jeff Opilas, mobile phone no. 09197136004. Ryan D. Rosauro, PDI Mindanao Bureau

ROUNDUP

AFP team to study transfer of Southcom to Pagadian

ZAMBANGA CITY—The military said it would form a survey board to study the feasibility of the transfer of the Southern Command headquarters here to Pagadian City.

During Monday's hearing of the House defense committee, Southcom chief Lt. Gen. Alberto Braganza and Lt. Gen. Edilberto Adan, the military's deputy chief of staff, said the survey board would also determine where the money for the transfer would come.

On March 16, President Macapagal-Arroyo ordered the transfer of the Southcom headquarters.

"The head of the transfer order from Southcom chief Braganza also as the senior duty officer (SDO) right now during a meeting with military and civil officials during her visit to Zamboanga City last March 16," Adan said.

Both Adan and Braganza said they could not ascertain the exact cost of the transfer and its implications.

Pantaleon Rep. Pablo Cabo, the committee chair, said the transfer order came as a surprise because no study was made.

"How can you implement the transfer when normally a study has to be made first before a decision is made by the President?" Cabo said.

Zamboanga City Mayor Celso Lobregat, and Reps. Francis Escudero, Jacinto Paras, Rolex Suplico said the transfer order could affect the peace and security of the region and the east is would result to better access to more pressing matters in the military.

Lobregat said Mr. Arroyo's order has caught the city's residents, including the military by surprise.

Rep. Jr. William Emont, 51, of the Movement for Better Zamboanga, said Mr. Arroyo was ill-advised as it could pose a security problem to the entire region. Inquirer Zamboanga City is the center of Western Mindanao.

"The best solution is for the maintenance of the status quo," Zamboanga del Norte Rep. Romulo Espinosa said.

The defense committee said it was giving the military one month to complete the study. But Adan said they might need more time before they could come up with the result. Sally L. Santiago, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Hero's burial for cop

CITY OF CALAPAN— PDI Bureau | Updated 12:00 AM May 12, 2005

The Roxas, Oriental Mindoro police was given a 'heroes' burial on May 7 with a 21-gun salute at the Provincial Capitol Gardens in Barangay San Vicente, Roxas town. Corma was killed on April 28 while trying to save bus passengers from being held up. He was recently awarded the Medal of Valor by the Philippine National Police. Supt. Marcelino Romero, assistant provincial director for operations, told the Inquirer that Corma was going home from Manila. The gunman allegedly had his instinct as a police officer, which made him open fire. Corma died on the spot. Romero, meanwhile, said the task force is investigating town and other areas where Magan is believed to be present.

Mauricio T. Vinoya, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Anti-logging body hailed

CITY OF CALAPAN— The multi-sectoral Provincial Task Force is tasked with to counteract to the Task Force Sagittarius Kidnapping and suspension of the municipal local officials in the Province. It is the most successful operation against an illegal lumber dealer. The move is hoped to speed up anti-logging operations in southern Mindoro. Sr. Jim Regala, director of the Apostolic Vicariate of the Calapan Diocese Environmental Desk, said the creation of the task force is disappointing town and other areas where illegal cutting is rampant.

Mauricio T. Vinoya, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Kidnap suspect nabbed

CALAMBA, Laguna—Members of the Cavite Provincial Police Mobile Group arrested a suspected member of the Abubakar Dalangan-based kidnap-for-ransom Abubakar Group in Brgy. Mayapa, Calamba City, Laguna on Tuesday. Senior Supt. Leopoldo Bachoco, director of the provincial police, said Christopher Gumbocher, 37, of Barangay Mahayahay, Tukuran City, was arrested in his safehouse in Barangay Mayapa Norte on Tuesday. Gumbocher was the subject of a warrant of arrest for murder issued by Saint Tomasian City Judge Voltaire Rosales.

Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

'Jueteng' persists in Mindoro

CITY OF CALAPAN—

"Jueteng' continues in Oriental Mindoro despite the crackdown by the police, says Inquirer reporter, according to Supt. Marcelino Romero, assistant provincial police director for operations and group director of the PDRG.

Provincial Mobile Group. "Our town is not enough," he said. "We have to be connected effort by the provincial police and officials," he added.

Mauricio T. Vinoya, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Police denies 'jueteng' link

BISLIG CITY—A policeman, from Misamis Occidental, who is assigned to Angeles City, has denied he is involved in 'jueteng' operations in Central Luzon. SPO4 Hilario "Larry" Dalipog said he and his fellow policemen are not involved in illegal activities. He was arrested along Quezon Highway with illegal betting slips. The persons whose gambling paraphernalia were seized by Dalipog's group identified with illegal activities in the Angeles City area. Dalipog's group is the most notorious illegal gambling operations in the province. Dalipog's name figured in the police search list of alleged jueteng operators as of 2003, which was reported by the Inquirer on April 26.

Felipe Cobus, PDI Visayas Bureau

TOUGH SEARCH
A treasure hunter holds a gold scanning device near an excavation at a basement in a house in Baguio City in the hope of finding treasure supposedly left behind by Japanese soldiers during World War II.

Drilon backs mayor as official candidate of Liberals in race for governor of ARMM

DAVAO CITY—Senate President Franklin Drilon said the choice of businessman Ibrahim Paglas II as standard-bearer of the Liberal Party (L) coalition in the Aug. 8 gubernatorial election in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao was based on a strong anti-corruption platform of governance.

In a statement, Drilon said on Monday that Paglas and his running mate Dato Dimapaya, are the answer to the need for development and progress in Mindanao.

"The Liberal Party is offering the people of the autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao the option of electing political leaders who, for a change, can finally bring about effective governance, economic development and transparency in the exercise of autonomous government. This LP slate is standing on an anti-corruption platform," Drilon, who is also LP president, said.

Drilon said the LP slate "will be composed of political leaders with impressive track records in governance and whose personalities in civil society who have been advocating for peace, development and anti-corruption programs."

"After decades of conflict, it's about time that Muslim Mindanao should have a political leader who is not only an astute dialogue adversary but also a proven public manager who will bring economic development and foreign investments to the region," he said.

The 43-year-old Paglas successfully built a farming estate in formerly war-torn Datu Paglas, Maguindanao and nearby towns.

He is also a civil society personality in Central Mindanao being a leading official of peace and development oriented non-governmental organizations. Paglas was also a Ten Outstanding Young Filipino awardee.

The three-term mayor of Datu Paglas municipality is the grandson of the late Sen. Salipada Pendatun and a nephew of former Moro Islamic Liberation Front chair Nabbit Salamat.

"Paglas is very development-oriented and advocates complete transparency in governance. Given the chance, I am confident he would be able to address the problems of poverty and the lack of effective governance in Muslim Mindanao," Drilon said.

The Senate President warned that unless an effective and graft-free government are delivered in Muslim Mindanao, extreme poverty would continue to create religious extremism and terrorism as attractive options among disgruntled people.

President Macapagal-Arroyo earlier decided not to endorse any candidate for the 5th ARMM elections.

The President earlier declared the coming elections a "free zone" and would recognize as official candidates anyone running under the banner of the K-4 coalition.

Regional Legislative Assembly Speaker Datumil Mamasi has withdrawn from the race. PDI Mindanao Bureau

Solon denies Abra's culture of violence

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet—There may be cases of politically motivated killings in Abra but this does not mean that a culture of violence prevails in the province, Abra Rep. Luis Bersamin Jr. said earlier on Wednesday.

Bersamin said the solution to Abra's peace and order problem lies with the courts trying the cases tied to politics and the amendment of the law allowing local officials to name their provincial or town police chiefs.

He said not even the existence of private armies or warring political groups and the incidents of election-related violence in the province would be enough to label Abra as a "killing field."

"It just so happened that those involved are public officials and political aspirants. And the killings have magnified because they usually happen during the election period," he said.

Bersamin, who was the guest during a three-day statesmanship convention among Cordillera officials at the Benguet State University here, said the government's decision to relieve Abra's 229-member police force was "very justifiable."

He said the key in restoring full peace in the province lies with the courts.

"Lasting peace will not come to Abra if the courts cases are not terminated," he said.

He was referring to cases filed before the Abra Regional Trial Court involving provincial and local officials. He, however, refused to identify these officials.

Last month, former Secretary Angelo Reyes relieved Abra's police force following the findings of a task force that police officers and their men have been between armies and supporters of local officials.

Army officials have also directed the relief of the 41st Infantry Battalion based in Lagangilang, Abra, although the order has yet to be implemented.

Bersamin said Reyes has formed a panel composed of representatives from the Department of Interior and Local Government, the Philippine National Police and the National Police Commission to evaluate the effect of the police pullout in Abra.

The panel is also tasked to decline to that warring political groups in the province would review at mutually acceptable cease-fire or truce agreement.

Should the panel recommend the return of the relieved police personnel, Bersamin said, "only the low-ranked policemen should be restored and not their officers." Delmar Cariño, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Farmers force way into DLR to demand land

BAGUIO CITY—More than 20 members of Task Force Magulad (TFM) on Tuesday forcibly entered the headquarters of Land Reform (DLR) provincial office here to demand the installation of 143 farmer-beneficiaries to a disputed property in La Casa Blanca town, Negros Occidental.

The entry happened between 9:30 a.m. and 10 a.m. when TFM members pushed the gate and busted their way into the office, prompting security guard Lucio Pinto to file a warning shot, said DLR information officer Imelda de los Santos.

He said the TFM members, led by Jerry Calubig, did not heed to the warning shot. Instead, he added, one of them told the guard: "Kaysaga nang bala mo dyan sa hangin! Wa pa'ri'yo, isut sa akon mo ginawa (you wasted your bullet, you fired it in the air, you should have fired it at me)."

As the crisis progressed, some DLR provincial office personnel, out of fear, locked themselves inside their offices, he said.

The crisis ended when the members of the Regional City Mobile Group and Baguio police provincial [illegible].

Acting Provincial Agrarian Reform Officer Isidoro Tuppajin Jr. then held a dialog with the TFM members to address their concerns.

During the dialog, the protesters asked that they be installed in a property previously owned by Roberto Cuizon in La Castellana town, as ordered by the Supreme Court.

"We asked for a copy of the ruling on the appeal of Cuizon but they could not provide us a copy," he said.

Rory Tejada, TFM spokesperson, said they had been holding a picket outside the DLR provincial office for a week to demand the installation of 182 beneficiaries on the 1,444-hectare property. Carla B. Gomez, *PDI Visayas Bureau*

REPLICA
Workers push a late Golden Buddha bust in a court in Baguio City. Thousands of treasure hunters donate themselves to finding the vast amounts of gold they say was left by retreating Japanese forces at the end of World War II.

Toxic chemicals linger in Bohol poison victims

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—The 116 children who survived food poisoning in Bohol in March still need medical help to completely rid their bodies of toxic chemicals, an official of the Provincial Social Welfare League of the Philippines (PSWLP) said.

The detoxification program for the survivors in Sonsogon San Jose in Mabini town has to be sustained for three months more, according to Antipas Bond of Members Villareal Pharm Ltd, the league's national president, citing the advice of government doctors.

Porio said his group has been training funds for the victims of the Bohol food poisoning.

"They're still weak and under medication," Porio told Pampan.

pa board members on the sidelight of his meeting with them here on Monday.

He said eight of the children, mostly 12 years old and below, were still in the hospital. The rest were recuperating at home.

Porio considered them lucky for being able to live through the incident that killed 27 other children.

"The poison they took in was really strong. It was pesticide mixed with the cassava root that they ate," he said. In poor provinces where houses are small, like these and the cassava are mixed with farm materials, by accident, the resident got a material out of the poison, not knowing that the [illegible] was poison," he said.

The survivors were being treated to a charcoal-based medicine that he described as expensive and unaffordable to poor families.

"They're not being neglected by the local government, and other agencies but we know that funds were not enough," Porio said.

The league's disaster management, Management and Assistance through Rayanihan (Damayan) has initially raised P23,000 from the contributions of board members.

The amount, set aside for the purchase of the medicine, was distributed to the families of survivors on April 18, Porio said.

Board members in Pampanga contributed P6,000 on Monday.

Porio said he hoped more funds would coming to sustain the medication and eventually prepare the children for the school opening in June.

Those willing to contribute may contact the league through 0920-203-5440.

Raps against cassava vendor reach court

By Dino A. Fuentes
PDI Visayas Bureau

TAGBILARAN CITY—The Provincial Prosecutor's Office (PPO) has elevated to the court the criminal charge against a cassava vendor in connection with the food poisoning that claimed the lives of 27 schoolchildren in Mabini, Bohol, last March 9.

In a three-page resolution dated April 29, provincial prosecutor Ruffin Quiseng said there was probable cause to charge vendor Amo Layoug with reckless imprudence resulting in multiple homicide.

The resolution said Layoug's act constituted reckless imprudence because of his "inexcusable lack of precaution" in cooking the cassava marapa, which was mixed with or contaminated/sprayed by the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI).

Last March 9, Layoug sold a cassava dish locally known as marapa (flattened) at San Jose Elementary School in Mabini town, about 109 km from Tagbilaran.

Many pupils bought the frito and shared these with their classmates and friends. Also several canteens, the pupils, who ate the marapa, started to complain of stomachache, vomiting, nausea, excessive sweating and blurry sight.

Alarmed about the situation, teachers and parents immediately brought the children to hospitals. Some 27 later died while many others were confined.

In her defense, Layoug, 66, denied that she was negligent in cooking the marapa and said there were other vendors who sold food at the public school.

In an investigation conducted by the NBI on March 11, the [illegible] contained insecticide [illegible] "1,2,3" and a frying pan used in cooking the marapa, which poisoned unknown white residue.

Group of mayors assails destabilization attempts

A GROUP OF the country's city mayors yesterday denied the use of extra-constitutional means and hinted interest for incoming local elections through democratic processes amid continuing destabilization threats.

In a manifesto, the League of Cities of the Philippines (LOC), representing 118 cities nationwide, declared its unwavering support to President Macapagal-Arroyo and duly constituted authorities in a bid to dissuade moves by antigovernment forces attempting again to create instability.

"We are agree that there is need to institute reforms in this country, but in a civilized nation of 85 million people, there is going be meaningful changes must pursue the aims through a peaceful, democratic way," said LOC president and Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Treñas in a statement.

Treñas said the people cannot afford to lose sight of upheavals around the world which should be examples of the destruction of extra-constitutional means of change.

GAS-SAVING DEVICE
Tipid nga ba o dala ay disgrasya?

Sa Inquirer Ang Pamana ni Alma
Globe Making great things possible
Sa Byline Inquirer InQuest Files sa INQTV
Sa Tanong ng Bayan Trenta pesos na dagdag-sahod, pwede na ba?

The InqTV News Video SHOOTOUT
P100,000!

Ating kabalitaan Cheri Mercado
Tuwing Huwebes, 10:30 ng gabi,
pagkatapos ng American Idol! Dito lang sa
ABC HOPE Globe

INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Puerto Galera Bay among world's best

By Madonna T Virola
Puerto Galera, Oriental Mindoro

THE PUERTO Galera Bay in northern Oriental Mindoro is now a member of the prestigious Club of Most Beautiful Bays in the World.

Supported by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco), the club is an international nongovernment organization based in Geneva, France which aims to promote, protect and develop marine and bay resources.

It was founded in Serbia in March 1997, upon the initiative by the tourism office of the Yucatan region in the Gulf of Mexico in Mexico.

Puerto Galera is the 32nd bay in the world to be recognized as among the world's most beautiful and the third in Asia after the Halong and Nha Trang bays in Vietnam. It is the first in the Philippines.

The accreditation was based on four concrete parameters, enhancement, promotion and local people's participation in the project.

Puerto Galera's winning bid was represented by Fernando Hubert d'Oneville, 58, in an audio-visual documentary he presented before 80 club members in Ajaccio, Morocco, in November last year.

On May 7, D'Oneville turned over the diploma of club membership to the municipal government, through Vice Mayor Juan Swan, at his house in Villa Mulawin during the launching of the Puerto Galera Bay Association, the club's local chapter. Over a hundred guests came, the Frenchman said.

The Puerto Galera Bay's club membership was recognized on March 30 in Nha Trang. The club has been helping it gain worldwide publicity.

D'Oneville showed to his guests the club's presentation that won the membership diploma for the bay.

Discovery

The documentary narrated that Puerto Galera was discovered by Spanish explorers Martin de Goiti and Juan de Salcedo on their way to Manila in 1570. Since the 16th century, it has been known as endowed as a trading post and strategic harbor along the ideal shipping routes to and from the east East, before the coast, Indochinese coast, China, various points within the Philippine archipelago, and the kingdoms of Borneo and Java.

According to residents, the town of Puerto Galera used to be a lonely place, but nobody wanted to inherit the beach area from their parents, until it was discovered in the 1960s by European backpackers.

D'Oneville said the University of the Philippines established a marine biological station in the town in the mid-1970s.

The port has identified 121 fish species from the reefs from the families of Pomacentridae, Labridae, Acanthuridae, Chaetodontidae, 11 species; nine out of 15 seagrass species in the whole world; 19 of the 40 mangrove species in the Philippines (Avicennia and the Rhizophora species); Anisoptera or Bakuko and the Artocarpus marycrop; 312 out of 600 coral species in the country; and the rare basal corals, Anacropora puertogalera.

In the 1970s, Puerto Galera became a "Hare and Boogaboo Resorts," an environmental program of the Unesco, owing to its diverse and unique marine and terrestrial flora and fauna.

THE BEAUTY of Puerto Galera is captured in photos presented to the Club of Most Beautiful Bays in the World. ROBERT DIMPAS

In 2000, the Department of Tourism declared it the ninth tourist destination in the Philippines.

D'Oneville, a farmer, married Arnel Mercado, a Filipina and granddaughter of revolutionary hero Pio Valenzuela, in 1982. Arnel was then engaged in tourism work in Manila.

Later, D'Oneville commissioned a man to look all over the country for a place in a nice, idyllic seventh, the man could not find a place to his liking, he said.

On their 10th wedding anniversary, the Frenchman was married about his gift to his wife. "My wife saved me on the evening of Dec. 31, 1991, at the Zero Beach. They were holding beautiful shells from the shores of Puerto Galera."

The following day, D'Oneville went to Tony Taylor, owner of the Mandaweni golf course in Puerto Galera, and was shown a 2,000-square-meter property. "It was just the size of my lot in Manila. I wanted more space to stay outside," he said.

One day, as he traversed Mount Malabotibo, he climbed a tamarind tree and saw a scenic view of Puerto Galera. "And that's it," he said.

A certain Angelito Campio showed him a land title covering an area of 10 hectares and one square meter, which, incidentally, was the number of years D'Oneville had been married (10 years and one day). Right on, the land purchase was consummated.

"My boss had the best relationship with the Gonzalezes since then," said D'Oneville.

Now a resident of Puerto Galera for 25 years, D'Oneville has been bringing many of his countrymen to Puerto Galera. He owns a house in Manila, where he manages a power and telecommunication company. He is involved in a rural electrification project in Mindoro, which is financed by the French government.

Personal advocacy

D'Oneville's commitment is more than personal. Thwarted by degraded after 20 years. Even of surrendering until kill a place. Unwhatsoever is very tricky, you have to drink and plan. We don't want this to happen to Puerto Galera," he said.

"The world is so small, fragile. We're caretakers for a short time. I also care for myself and to the future, we have to protect while enjoying the environment. It's our responsibility to keep it, the terrible at the continuing cutting of trees in the country. People seem to not be scared of the effects," he said.

He remains steadfast in his advocacy for Puerto Galera, following up what the municipal government has done on reported cases of illegal logging.

A hectare of coffee plantation was started by his farm manager, Manong Marilo, a graduate of the University of the Philippines.

"We sell plant seedlings to be given away to the people around us. I can buy their produce and sell them to benefit it can be like a cooperative," he said. "They'll be happy and this will even stop soil erosion," he said.

D'Oneville has been editing with his people. "Whether the diploma will remain on the mayor's table or the recognition will remain as such it is to be seen. And I don't know whether they've understood me."

"People here are so familiar with Puerto Galera that there is a lot granted. We're not much concerned with money but with conservation (of resources and beauty), job [promotion], then attracting tourists. Purity of air, freedom and others are what the paying tourists are after," said D'Oneville.

Because of D'Oneville's sweet liaisons, Councilor Daniel Enriquez has proposed to make the French man an "adopted son" of the town.

He collects the world through stamps

By Joel G. Sucaldito
Legazpi City

I COLLECT the whole world and I'm halfway through it," Swiss philatelist Walter Goetz says. Twenty years into stamp collecting and he has already amassed half of the world's postage stamps.

"I have millions of postage stamps here, but I can't possibly give the exact count because I already stopped counting some time ago," he said.

Goetz's collection, arranged chronologically in albums of different countries, rarely leaves the comfortable confines of his study room that he dedicates solely to his hobby.

Each stamp is painstakingly snapped to plastic hinged and labeled with details such as date of issue, title, description, publications and denominations—on the pages of more than 400 stamp books that he himself made.

His collection, which includes first day covers and postcards, virtually spans the whole world, from the United States and Britain to the little-known Pitcairn Islands and the small states, Liechtenstein, Monaco and Vatican City.

"Stamps from those small, unknown countries are actually the valuable ones because these governments make stamps only in quantities for their tiny populations, so, it's not easy to acquire one," he explained.

He also takes pride of his three complete sets of Philippine stamps, from the first issued during the Spanish era up to those issued in 2000.

He said he especially liked the Philippine stamps because of the rich history they chronicle.

Childhood pastime

Goetz, who has been residing in Legazpi City for more than 12 years, started collecting postage stamps since his elementary years in Chur, Switzerland.

"During my childhood years, the world was not so much electronic and our toys were not high-tech gadgets compared to nowadays. Our pastime then was to remove the stamps from our parents' letters, collect them and bring them to school to trade with classmates," he recalled.

But Goetz did not consider getting full-time into stamp collecting. He took up electronic engineering in college in Zurich and sought a regular job after graduation.

He practiced his profession in Zurich for five years. His expertise brought him to countries, such as Libya and Lebanon, where he helped build power plants for Asea Brown Boveri Ltd., one of the largest electrical engineering companies in the world.

Seeking warmer climes, he came to the Philippines in the 1980s and engaged in several businesses. He managed a hotel in Manila, a resort in Tagaytay, Laguna, and a small factory in Calbiga, Leyte.

"Managing those businesses was a 24-hour job. I got maybe three or four hour sleep everyday," he recounted.

Having his fill of white-collar jobs and residing a most peaceful, polluted-free place, he moved to Legazpi and started an apartment rental business with his Filipina wife.

"The apartment business is a very good business, and the ones I handled before. It also gave me time to go back to my passion," he said.

Full-time

Now a full-time stamp collector, Goetz, who is turning 58 this year, spends most of his time scrutinizing stamps, arranging his collection and preparing letters to fellow stamp collectors all over the world for stamp trades and auctions.

"Sometimes, I would wake up at 4 a.m. and I could not sleep, so I go to my study room. I usually spend eight to 10 hours there. It has become my work," he says.

During summers, he runs into helpers to assist him sweep the stamps in books and send letters to other collectors around the world.

According to him, stamp collecting is a very meditative hobby. It is relaxing, but the fulfillment can do-

SWISS philatelist Walter Goetz with his stamp collection. PHOTO BY JOEL G. SUCALDITO

mate from it is the outright the effort.

He says it's not only that he goes to see stamps from other countries, he gains many friends as well.

Despite the tourists hours Goetz spends on his collection, he does not derive any income from it.

"I am not after the money so I never sell my stamps. I exchange them with my friends abroad. What is how I increase my collection," he claims.

Goetz boasts of over a hundred collector-friends from all the continents who exchange stamps with him consistently.

A single exchange might involve hundreds or thousands of stamps, according to him. But he also accepts exchanges involving five to 10 stamps.

He says he receives around 20 to 30 mails everyday from other traders around the world. "You don't need a lot of money in stamp collecting, what you need are friends," he says.

But Goetz admits to spending money in stamp auctions. According to him, he spends P10,000-P20,000 in auctions in Manila and abroad monthly.

"I don't mind spending money for my collections. Money can be earned back, but the opportunity to acquire a certain rare stamp or to be added to your collection might never come again," he explains.

More than gold

More than collecting stamps of different values, I am collecting pieces of the history of a country. That is worth more than the money," he adds.

According to him, a stamp is a communication of all the important events and persons of a country.

On the commercial aspect, a stamp is worth more than gold, Goetz says.

"Gold's value increases or decreases over time, depending on the gold market. But the value of a stamp does not decrease, it always goes higher over time," he adds.

With the advent of electronic communication, like e-mail and text messaging, and the utilization of substitute stamps, he never that the use of postage stamps would be ever very soon.

"The value of postage stamps issued today could rise up dramatically when postage stamps become obsolete a few years from now," Goetz said. "If young people would start collecting today, they would definitely end up with a major collection by then."

Get the killers of newsmen, GMA orders Reyes

By Christine O. Avendaño

PEOPLE, the government is taking a more firm hand in solving the unsolved killings of media people.

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday instructed Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes to solve the series of murders of journalists the way he solved kidnapping for ransom.

"I want it to be a very tight plan, the way Secretary Reyes was able to do the tight plan to solve the kidnapping problem," the President told reporters.

The President's statement comes in the wake of the killings of Philip Agustin, publisher-editor of Bonbon Times Newsday, in Bingalan, Aurora.

The President said she had authorized Reyes to "convene with the private sector a consultative meeting among stakeholders."

"So we could all work together on how to solve and prevent the killings of media people," she said. "Let's all get together."

The President said the anti-Ignacio Ano de Mencia news putting up a fund for additional reward for information on the killings.

She said she would donate P2 million while the Senate would give P2 million.

Ay warranted by the consultative meeting, we will see what kind of measures the CIDG (Criminal Investigation and Detection Group of the Philippine National Police) or whatever partners in solving the cases of journalists will be needed. We will provide resources available," she said.

In the Senate, Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan yesterday called on the committee on justice and human rights to start an investigation of the spate of killings of journalists.

The Senate committee on justice and human rights is chaired by Sen. Juliet Ate-ys.

For his part, Sen. Ramon Revilla Jr. urged PNP Chief Director General Arturo Lomibao to hunt down and prosecute the killers of journalists, or "resign."

"This is very, very disturbing. The PNP's inability to prosecute and punish perpetrators enabling more desist who are behind these crimes," said Revilla, chair of the committee on public information and mass media.

"If we do not act on this immediately then this country is not fit to be called a democratic nation," he said. With a report from Norman Bordadora

Publisher shot dead; 6th RP journalist killed in 5 months

where he found three gunshots.

"I rushed back and found that Bienbled. He was unable to talk. I took him to the Aurora Memorial hospital where he died minutes later," Lapus said in a phone interview.

Lapus said one of the bullets hit Agustin behind his left ear.

Bingalan police investigator Basil Montero said one of the two unidentified assailants, who fled on a motorcycle, shot Agustin from a window. Officials in the regional police office in Camp Olivas, Pampanga, said the assailants used .45 cal. pistols.

Threats since last week

Nenita Mendoza, Agustin's sister, said the "shoot-to-kill" order killer brother's life started coming last week.

"I told him to be careful because a week before (his top priest, two men in black leather jackets and who were wearing shoes were surveying my house and Apli's (daughter's house," Mendoza said.

Mendoza said Agustin had received him not to return to Bingalan, but even during his birthday on May 1," she added.

Mendoza said her brother left town two weeks ago when he got word that Mayor Jaime Ilustre, a retired policeman, had been acquitted of the reports published in Bonbon Times Newsday.

Lapus said he came to see Agustin to also tell him to be careful. He said Agustin had informed him of his armed through a text message.

Truth suppressed

"Hindi to sila pinatayan. (They did not hit the chance pero)," Mendoza said, referring to her brother's plan to distribute Bonbon Times Newsday's special edition on Wednesday.

It carried stories on alleged missing calamity funds, other goods and drugs, the nomination of a cockpit that used the aluminum roof of the town's slaughterhouse and the town fiesta cooperative program for more than 1,000 families displaced by the landslides in November and December 2004.

Lapus said the May 3-6 edition's two banner stories carried the headlines "Dingalan, Aurora, kapit sa patalim (Dingalan, Aurora, hanging by a thread)" and "Mga kaso ng killings, dito in Dingalan, Aurora, 1!!" and "Mamamayan, in mong, sumigaw na (Residents residents have spoken)."

Bonbon Times Newsday's website have been operating for five years now, maintains offices in Isabela and Dingalan. It has a weekly circulation of between 500 and 1,000 and is distributed in Cagayan Valley and Central Luzon provinces.

Mendoza said the first 30 copies of the special edition were released last last week.

Residents lapped up the 500 copies on Wednesday, she said.

Lapus said the killing of Agustin is another of the "vicious suppression of the freedom of expression."

Mayor denies hand in slay

Ilustre, reached by phone in Dingalan, said he had asked the police to conduct an investigation of the killing.

He said he had "nothing to do with it" and warned his "name abused of any doubt."

But Nardo Ano-ó, a friend of Agustin, said the publisher had "strongly criticized" him and attributed to him many alleged irregularities.

Before Agustin was attacked, Ilustre said he planned to sue Agustin and his "accomplices" for libel. He said Agustin's "accomplices" were his political enemies whom he would sue for libel after he gathered sufficient evidence against them.

Ilustre said Agustin had been charged with several libel cases. He claimed that Agustin took money from some 200 Dingalan residents to refuse to sold land owned by the Buencamino family, one of the biggest landowners in the town.

It was because of these cases that Agustin left town several years ago, according to the mayor. "Maraming problema yan dito (He has many problems here)," Ilustre said.

Birthday

Lapus, however, described Agustin as a "good man." Mendoza called her brother a "brave person."

Lapus said Agustin, out of desperation because of the slow progress and alleged corruption in Dingalan, ran for mayor but lost in 1998.

Mendoza said the killers said the brother before her elder brother's killing should be brought to justice.

"Sumusuyo, pero ay ang ang ang kanya-kanya (We only want justice)," she said.

In Isabela, Lalay Aguinaldo Ibangay, another sister of Agustin's, said she last saw her brother when he celebrated his birthday in Cauayan City on May 1.

"The killer should be jailed to pay for his crime," Ibangay said.

PNP spokesperson Senior Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil said PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao and regional police officials were en route to Dingalan to look into the killing and assess Agustin's family of police actions. With reports from Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Advice for threatened newsmen . . .

(COE) said yesterday.

Rasul Bagao, provincial chair of the COE in Davao Oriental, said journalists should widen their options because they could no longer count the government to protect them.

"If you are critical of the military and the police, and yet you want to call on security assistance from them, you are like a fool. The security assurances they will provide will be the same as kill you," he said.

He said the 909, would not turn down the request of journalists for help.

"The same with those journalists critical of the NPA, they should seek assistance from their friends in the military and police," said Amoguerres, also the first manager of Radyo Natin.

Tougher libel laws

But two members of the House of Representatives said tougher libel laws and a "professionalized" media could stop the spate of killings of journalists.

Camarines Sur Rep. Felix Alfelor Jr. said the murders could be due to Filipinos being sensitive to criticisms.

He said the killings also showed that the country's libel laws were not effective.

"We are job-skilled compared with other countries. Can you not attribute my punishment as the severe cause of [killings] of those committing [libel]. Maybe may consider lawmakers' statements as libelous [to] perhaps, because of their hostilities before the assembly, they are forced to do it?" Alfelor said.

Alfelor said he was "definitely for press freedom" but he added that this should not be abused.

"I believe it is also important that we take the side of those who are being hit, especially the government officials , because I know for example that a lot of communicators are indeed [still] malice," he said.

'Investigational' journalism

"Most of these communicators are being funded. You cannot find a commentator who is not being funded by somebody," Alfelor said.

He said the political enemies of the officials being criticized usually fund the media.

Lanao del Norte Rep. Bienvenido Saminaga, who delivered on Monday a privilege speech condemning the murder of his friend and broadcaster Elvis Carizo-on Carizo in Dipolog City, agreed that there was a need to review the country's libel laws.

Interpellating Saminaga, Basilan Rep. Gerry Salapuddin said "irresponsibilities" in media might have contributed to the country being called the most dangerous country in the world for journalists.

"Does the gentleman not think that there must be something wrong in the way our media [people] practice their profession? Sometimes you can hear of 'envelopmental journalism.'" That when they are paid a price... they are willing to let anybody or write anything against any person or any political opponent?" Salapuddin said.

Saminaga suggested that a law be passed so that media assessments "will have teeth" to monitor members.

He said journalists could be required to enact certain "qualifications" like having acquired a number of journalism units.

"And then, there should be a regular conduct of seminars, not only on the freedom to write, but also on the freedom not to write," said Saminaga, a former journalist.

Cavite Rep. Gilbert Remulla, a former TV reporter, agreed that media could become victims of professionalization," warning that the public has responded with apathy to the killings.

"There isn't really much of a hoot, only the journalists are protesting. I think it's because it's been that it is really shocked by these killings. I am rather shocked by this situation," he said.

In Davao Oriental, Eastern Mindanao PNP provincial chief Romeo Rose is not the only way journalists could protect themselves was to be responsible at all times.

"You only let because you have to hit people in government who are not doing their jobs," said Rose, station manager of Madayao FM.

Ronald "Ronnie" Gargoles Cantong Cantong said security alone would not answer our reality.

"You will still die even if you have security escorts. I don't believe in guns. It won't protect you. Being a responsible media man is the best protection for us," he said.

Dennis Lazo of Radyo Radyo said "It's better to be alone."

Threats to broadcaster

"We know already that working in the media is a dangerous profession. By choosing this career, you have already offered your life to the public," Lazo said.

In Iloc Cebu, Bohinon, broadcaster Arthur "Art" Tapang-hari, a correspondent of dzRH Radyo Inquirer of the Catholic Media Network, said he had seen suspicious-looking men outside his house since Sunday.

The men, who were riding motorcycles, have also been asking about his whereabouts.

Tapanghari said he was one of the men and was alarmed because "he was wearing a helmet when it was almost dusk."

"He also kept on smiling. I called for police assistance but he had already left when they arrived," he said.

Tapanghari said before the sightings, unidentified men had threatened to kill him if he would continue with his work.

"They told my wife for him stop [broadcasting] or he would be silenced," Tapanghari said.

Attempts to life

"Bandillo has eaten the fourth-rate portion of Bukidnon where controversial issues abound. We have received letters to be careful following the assassination of his fellow journalist," Fr. Rey Rabusa, station manager of dxBK said.

Father Rabusa said Tapanghari narrowly escaped an attempt to kill him.

"Two motorcycle-riding men fired shots at him while he was walking to his nipa hut.

Rabusa said there were also attempts to bribe Tapanghari but the broadcaster turned down the offers. Reporters from Ferdinand H. Zaragoza, Orvee Conrad Alfonso and Philip C. Tubeon

IN THE KNOW

Well-planned power grab

[illegible] Aurora, on May 3? 2004, 25? young soldiers wearing red armbands arrived at the Aurora Center in Baler and ordered everyone out of the area.

[illegible] Pharmacist Magdalena [illegible] they occupied the Aurora Provincial Hospital in Baler and ordered everyone out. Even Governor Bellaflor Angara-Castillo [illegible] Aurora Provincial Hospital Director Jennifer Reyes-Tayabas and Dr. Ana Rosario Arcilla [illegible] were forced outside.

The soldiers occupied [illegible] on March 29 town. They agreed to release the nurses after several hours of intense negotiations.

Lt. Col. Antonio Parlade Jr., spokesman for the Armed Forces of the Philippines, said the soldiers were members of the Philippine Marines. Parlade said the soldiers were [illegible] and [illegible] and [illegible] and

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Marikina walks thru history

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

WALK down memory lane in Marikina City.

In celebration of National Heritage Month, the city government will hold a walking tour that showcases its many people with the history of Marikina.

The tour will drop by heritage sites in the city like the Kapitan Moy, a century-old building where shoemaking is the city business.

Though already renovated, the building's walls and balconies are original.

It has served as a house, a school, a clinic and now a museum. The ground floor is a restaurant.

1.5-km tour

The 1.5-kilometer tour will start at 4 p.m. in front of the Riverbank Park near the City Hall.

Along the way, antique dealers will be served as tourists for free, the city public information office said.

There will be servings of sweet-sop (a version of the popular merienda), "everlasting" (steamed ground pork) and other native food.

Tourism Secretary Ace Durano is expected to attend the tour along with officials from the National Commission for Culture and the Arts and the Filipino Heritage Foundation.

Double life for 12 kilos of shabu

By Marco C. Carvajal

THE CALOOCAN City Regional Trial Court has sent a 38-year-old man to two life terms in jail for possession of 12 kilos of shabu.

Judge Henerito Abaoy of Branch 120 also ordered Joseph Jay Manigsa to pay a fine of P1 million for violating the Dangerous Drugs Act.

Manigsa, of 216 Tarzan Street, Unia Verde North, Kaybiga, Caloocan City, was arrested in a January 2001 buy-bust operation.

Prior to his arrest, police put Manigsa under surveillance after he was busted trapping (but he was hoping several kilos of high-grade shabu and that he was looking for a buyer.

After his arrest for possessing two kilos of shabu, Manigsa then accused SPO3 Arturo Lomibao of the illegal drug, which he had buried several months before in the policeman's house at Tokyo Street of the same village.

New drug mix fatal to users – PNP

By Luige A. del Puerto

A DRUG syndicate is trying to turn users into a more powerful drug by mixing methamphetamine hydrochloride, or shabu, and metamphetamine hydrochloride, popularly known as shabu.

But the combination could be deadly to users, Deputy Director General Ricardo de Leon warned the public yesterday.

"The drug has a very dangerous effect, and is definitely more harmful to the brain," De Leon said, quoting reports from the police chemical laboratory unit.

De Leon issued the warning after narcotics agents discovered 97 grams of mixed ketamine and shabu in a clandestine laboratory on Apo Street in Quezon City on Tuesday.

Agents also found 6.8 kilograms of ketamine worth around P34 million, several grams of shabu, and ephedrine, an chemical used in the manufacture of shabu inside the house. Police arrested J.B. Swallerson, caretaker of the house, during the raid.

"The operators are experimenting with shabu and ketamine. They may be trying to create a new drug. This is the first time we've seen this kind of mix," De Leon said.

The chief of the Central Police District Crime Laboratory said that ketamine is a hallucinogen while shabu is a stimulant.

"You are awake, and appear to be on cloud 9, but actually you could be like a walking robot," Inspr. Filipinas Francisco-Pupa described the sensation of a person who has taken the combined drugs.

Francisco-Pupa added that the user may no longer know what is happening around him. That is worse than taking shabu or ketamine alone, she added.

In June of this, the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency and the police's Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Task Force consider ketamine, and the new combination (ketamine and shabu) as "dangerous drugs."

A gram of ketamine costs around P60 dollars, and is now considered a dangerous drug.

De Leon said they have heard can today the big mine drug syndicates, allegedly run by Johnson Chua, has been manufacturing ketamine. "It turned out the chemicals are super-expensive, with a ketamine-shabu combination," De Leon said.

Chua had been linked to the Quezon City laboratory and another one raided in Cagayan de Oro last Monday.

He reportedly heads a syndicate that operated a huge shabu laboratory in Davao City that had been raided by authorities last New Year's eve.

De Leon added that the Quezon City laboratory had produced 10 kilos of ketamine. The caught had already been sent abroad.

Yesterday, police presented to the media Heribert Montano, alias "Bb. Pimp" and "Tina," a Chinese national and Chua's alleged right hand man.

Agents had seized a kilo of shabu worth P1.1 million from Montano in a buy-bust operation last week.

Using information supplied by Montano, agents swooped down on a Cagayan de Oro warehouse last Monday. The raid yielded 30 plastic drums of chemicals believed to be shabu.

The discoveries were an indication that drug lords could be shifting their operations to Mindanao and far-flung areas, according to PDEA Director General Anselmo Avenido Jr.

LONG, HOT SUMMER. Residents of a Manila suburb line up for water after a busted valve reduced the water supply in most Metro Manila areas. AMADO DOMINGO/AFP PHOTO

BIR seeing stars; more visits to follow

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue has been seeing stars, literally, after it had lifted a string of tax evasion cases against high-profile entertainment personalities, including Richard Gomez and Regine Velasquez.

Actors had been visiting the BIR offices to pay their tax deficiencies in order, according to BIR Deputy Commissioner Lizaso Evangelista.

"According to one of our division directors, actors have now been going to our offices to collect their documents. Maybe they didn't know that they needed to do that," he said at a National Press Club forum yesterday.

Lizaso said the bureau is banking on the "Star factor" that the filing of cases could get people to pay their taxes. According to him, the BIR focuses on the high profile ones because it does not have the same bodies to attend to all the cases it may go after every single taxpayer who has been remiss in his duties.

"Our objective is to file two to three cases, and our reward is compliance. There will be a 'star factor' and the impact is tremendous," he said.

The BIR is also set to use international tax treaties. Lizaso said BIR commissioner Guillermo Parayno had sent a representative to talk with an actors' organization headed by television host Gelman Moreno for a meeting between the two groups.

Lizaso said the BIR was not focusing in on entertainment figures. Gomez alleged non-filing of taxes was detected by a competitor, he said. Non-filers were easy to detect because the companies would only need to check blank spaces in the system. There were thanks for two years in Gomez's case, Lizaso added.

4 jeepney groups vow not to strike for 5 years

By Cinthya S. Babino

NO TRANSPORT strikes for as long as President Macapagal-Arroyo is in power.

This was the promise of four jeepney groups to Transport Secretary Leandro Mendoza yesterday during the rush-calling of the affiliates of a newly-established cooperative called the Philippine Jeepney Operators and Drivers Alliance Foundation.

The memorandum of understanding was signed by the federation of drivers and jeepney operators of the Philippines (Pinoydop), the Philippine Confederation of Drivers Organization Alliance of Concerned Transportation Operators (Pcdo-Acto), the Makati Jeepney Operators and Drivers Association (Mjoda), and the Alliance of Transport Operators and Drivers Association of the Philippines (Atodap). The militant Pinaglaisang Samahan ng Tsuper at Operator Nationwide (Piston) did not join the move.

In exchange, the jeepney groups sought reforms related to the traffic system, third-party insurance, and processing efficiency of the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB).

At the same time, the LTFRB assured the public that the P2 hike in jeep and metro bus fares would be the last for the year.

Fund lack blamed for trash woes

By Fran Rainfield, Edson C. Tandoc Jr. and Nancy C. Carvajal

THREE barangay mayors blamed fund lack and politics for the filing of charges accusing them of failing to enforce garbage segregation laws in their localities.

Pasallagan City Mayor Norma Hernandez said the city had no budget for waste segregation.

While also citing fund lack, Malabon City Mayor Canuto Oreta said undisciplined residents were making the implementation of the law hardier.

For his part, San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito called the charges filed by the Philippine Bar Association (PBA) as "political harassment."

The PBA on Tuesday said Ilernandez, Ejercito and Oreta for allegedly violating Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

"We have not violated any law [cited] with RA 9003 through the city's solid waste management board," said Hernandez.

But he said the city did not have the money for an information and educational campaign or to bring the practice of waste segregation to residences.

"We need to disseminate information but the city has no budget for that yet," Hernandez told the lawyers.

Ejercito yesterday admitted that garbage collected in his town remained unsegregated but cried foul over the filing of charges against him.

Noticing the San Juan public information office declared in a press statement that San Juan is the "cleanest town in Metro Manila."

But while there is "total cleanup" in San Juan, Ejercito admitted that only 50 percent of the town's garbage was being segregated.

"We are slowly implementing waste segregation," Ejercito said.

Mandina public information officer-Vaga Granados said the local government was trying to do its job despite the lack of funds and the non-cooperation of city residents.

Alone, budget constraints had affected funds for garbage collection which had been run by fifty percent, according to Encarnacion. He said they were trying to cope with the situation.

Environmental destruction at gold rush site

THE GOVERNMENT should adopt measures to protect the environment as the cursed gold rush site in Mindanao.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) never blind and deaf to the imminent destruction of the forest and creeks in Diwalwal, Monkayo, Davao Oriental.

"Even the being killed at the imminent hindrance to make money for rounds and building houses of miners.

The creeks that flow into the Mamay river downstream are now being polluted with mercury.

Mercury is used to process ore into gold.

What's happening in Sitio Kinamoran happened at Mt. Diwalwal in the Compostela Valley more than 20 years ago during the early gold rush.

Mt. Diwalwal's ecosystem has been destroyed by the gold mining activities.

Denr-Central officials were indifferent to the possible destruction of the environment caused by gold panning and mining became some of them get a piece of the action.

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

At least two of them are taking part in the gold rush: Gen. Maria Elena Bolante, through her son, Jeper and Prince Leonardo, president of the Association of Barangays Capitans in the province, and Board Member Dado Minano, the governor's closest ally.

The general perception in the province is that the governor doesn't care about the environment since she was also linked to the illegal logging activities on the mountains of Cateel town.

The governor is empowered under the law to oversee gold rush activities in her area.

She has formed Task Force Kalikasan for this purpose.

But she and chair, himself or for my initiative. The governor had excluded Mamay Mayor Marcelo Bayanghinog from the task force because the mayor happens to belong to a rival political party.

The governor is supposed to have control over peace and order and environmental concerns in his town.

* * *

Lawyers, no matter who their clients are, are just doing their jobs as litigation practitioners.

They should not be blamed for taking up the cudgels for their clients.

Vicente Ouidilan, a close friend, complains that he's been threatened with physical harm by the respondent in a civil case filed Petron Corp. vs. Herma Shipping and Transport Corp.

Ouidilan says Bernardo Fajardo, owner of Herma Shipping, is "holding me personally responsible for the consequences" resulting from the lawsuit.

The case involves the alleged pilferage by Herma Shipping and Transport employees of oil cargo owned by Petron.

Herma used to carry Petron products in its cargo ships.

Ouidilan says he's not scared. He just wants to expose the threat just in case something happened to him.

* * *

There are insinuations that Zamboanga del Norte Gov. Rolando Yebes might have had a hand in the murder of radio broadcaster Elvir Castronuevo.

Yebes is not capable of murder. That is, if I know him well.

Many years ago, when he was still with the Bureau of Customs, he was the subject of stories in this column.

Yebes' enemies use to talk to me and give his side. He never showed any hint of aggression when he talked with me.

Who knows, some other guy could have ordered Castronuevo killed so the blame would be placed on Yebes who would be a natural suspect.

The governor was the subject of Castronuevo's diatribe in his radio program.

But Yebes was not the only one whom the firebrand Castronuevo criticized.

SYMPOSIUM ON WHY COCONUT CURES

President Macapagal-Arroyo with Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap acknowledges the efforts of author Bruce Fife (left with smile) in promoting virgin coconut oil as an important health food in wellness oil-dominated America.

Naturopath and nutritionist Dr. Fife will lead a Saturday, May 14 symposium on "Why Coconut Cures" with cardiologist Conrado Dayrit, dermatologist Noreen Verallo-Rowell, and chamber Faisan Dayrit at Teatro Hotel on Roxas Blvd. Tereso Bunoan of VCO Philippines invites health advocates and medical practitioners to the two gathering with P+P (,500 visitors limited in number and lunch available at telephone nos. 525-1968/521-1768.

Heat, Spurs grab 2-0 lead

MIAMI—Dwyane Wade had 21 points, including a critical three-point play with 1:05 left, and added a career-high 15 assists to help the Miami Heat stay perfect in three playoffs with a 106-102 victory Tuesday over the Washington Wizards.

Miami leads the Eastern Conference semifinal series 2-0. Game 3 is Thursday at Washington, where the Heat have won 11 times in their last 14 visits.

Eddie Jones added 21 points, Shaquille O'Neal 15 and Damon Jones 14. Udonis Haslem had a 10-point, 13-rebound effort for Miami.

"It's kind of like pick your poison," Wade said. "You can either let the shoot or you can give somebody a layup. And tonight they came up on me, so some other guys got layups."

Antawn Jamison, playing with tendinitis in his right knee, had a playoff career-high 32 points for Washington. Gilbert Arenas added 20 for the Wizards, but the shot execution of their high-scoring trio, Larry Hughes, missed his first 11 shots and finished with 13 points on 5-for-17 shooting.

Wade made 10 of 16 shots and grabbed seven rebounds. In the first three quarters, Miami had 20 baskets, 22 either made by Wade or set up by his passes.

"We didn't take care of anything that we wanted to take care of," Heat coach Stan Van Gundy said. "And we won the game."

Jamison hit a floater from four minutes (12 feet) with 1:26 left to keep Washington within one. But Wade responded with a three-point play 35 seconds later. He drove past Jamison, darted left, drew contact from Jamison, then banged home with the left hand and stayed. The free throw gave Miami a 103-97 lead.

In San Antonio, Manu Ginobili came off the bench and fueled the rally with his usual array of tricks and long jumpers, making nine of 13 shots and scoring 28 points to lead San Antonio over Seattle, 108-91.

"I made a couple of three-pointers and that made my confidence go up higher," Ginobili said. "Once we get close to the paint, we try to finish the play or get fouled. That's our plan."

Tim Duncan won his usual wendy self with 20 points and nine rebounds.

Since a stunning first in home in the playoff opener against Denver, the Spurs have won six straight by an average margin of 16 points.

Game 3 is Sunday in Thursday.

Ray Allen shook off a sprained ankle that knocked him out of the opener and scored 25 points in 42 minutes for the Sonics. Rashard Lewis scored 22. The Sonics were had a stretch of 22 points scored by that duo.

The Sonics took a narrow lead remaining Tony Parker, but the point guard still scored 22 points and helped the Spurs make 53 percent of their shots.

AP

TONY Parker punctuates a fastbreak play with a dunk. Despite the defense thrown at him, the French guard still finished with 22 points.

SPORTSWATCH

LGV golfers top intervillage cast

LEYTE—Grand total of 619 pulled off a big surprise for the Metro Leyte Village golf tournament, posting 594 points under the Stableford scoring system and taking the first round of the nationwide circuit at the Forest Hills Golf Club in Tacloban. Team members Jerome Pinto came through with 203 points to lead the LGV golfers to the 12-on-play, 4-to-count format event. Tony Ho chipped in with 38 points while Rodolfo Lapuz, Allan Perolino and Michael Ho Sabe added 27 points each. The combined team of Chino Fernandez and Manolo Rivilla netted their 21% while Katie Rivilla-Tuason and Jennifer Ho Sabe rounded out the LGV village. In San Juan, Percy and Marilyn Chua-Ho Sabe finished in fourth place.

New Balance run listing ends May 15

MANILA—Registration for the New Balance Power Race is set May 15 with the addition of team competitions in the corporate level and in the collegiate ranks. The two new events are expected to spice up action in the country's premier running event lining off May 29 at the Fort Bonifacio Global City. Set as members, employees of the company for at least one year will compete in a one-mile dream while team runners of the open section will challenge a college squad. Entry fee is pegged at P1500 per member. Registration centers are at the Race Office, Ventura Municipal Plaza Bldg., Greenhills, San Juan, Nets Bonanza Fashion Supermall, second level, Makati, Mabuhay Nets Bonanza Greenbelt, ground floor, Glorietta 4, Makati City. The Athletes Foot, Robinsons Galleria, second level, Robinsons Place Ermita, Pacific Mall Starmall, second level, Power Plant Mall, Makati City, and The Athletes Foot Galleria, third level, Robinson's Galleria, Ortigas. For details, log on to www.nbpowerrace.com.

Aston rules MP Turbo Guam race

BEGUIL CITY—(2007) Philippine national touring car champion Carlos Aston of MP Turbo dominated the final round of the Guam Road Racers behind the wheel of a Suzuki International Raceway on May 1. Aston topped the event class with a time of 1:20.360, beating the three undefeated drivers by 0.700 second of Suzuki (1:20.360). In the street modified race where local competitors are not allowed, Aston also topped the event (1:22.421). Other Filipino racers Rafael Bichara (1:28.109), Edward Lee Fernando (1:28.109) and Charlie Aston were champion Adrian Ramos (1:28.317). PR Boniface Lance Bernar

Olympians rate Milo sports program

THE PHILIPPINE Olympians Association (POA) recently honored Milo with its first ever Aloha Award, in recognition of its active participation and commitment to sports development in the Philippines. The Aloha Awards is presented to individuals, organizations or institutions who have greatly contributed to sports development in the country. Milo was cited for its long-time and continued support of Filipino athletes, as well as its role in the promotion and development of sports in the grassroots level. Currently, Milo is conducting the Milo Summer Sports Clinics in over 1,200 venues around the country.

All imported stakes series slated

MANILA Jockey Club, Inc. (MJCI) recently announced the inauguration of the Philippine-sponsored "All Imported Stakes Series-A" on May 15 at the San Lazaro racecourse from the Carmona, Cavite. The race features the country's top caliber imported thoroughbreds that will compete for the top prize of P750,000.00. The runners-up will also receive P187,500.00, P93,750.00, P56,250.00 and fourth finishers products P37,500.00. Meanwhile, the Metropolitan Association of Racing Horse Owners' (MARHO) will match its 31st founding anniversary with the staging of a ten-day racing festival dubbed as the MARHO Founding Day Celebration on May 28-June 6.

HORSE owner Alex Munoz (center), representing C&H Enterprises, holds the coveted PCSO First Gentleman Silver Cup and a giant check worth P1.1 million following the victory of their horse Comet Gift in the prestigious classic race held last Sunday at the Santa Ana Park.

NCA championship gets going

MT. PAMARAT of Rep. Garry Roy Espinosa and Thunderbird Feeds I of Rep. Rene-renee Jacqui "Rene" Bondoc are the leading entries today when the National Cockers Association (NCA) 1 Cock Derby championship round gets going at the Araneta Coliseum. Both are last posted three wins each heading today's single elimination showdown. Congressman Robert-ayong Pichay and former ambassador Carolina Dalangin-Fortes tied 2-3 points to earn million striking distance. Meanwhile, all is set for the semi and NCA derby on May 15 and 16. Also slated is the 7-cock promotional Sweet Cock Report Jr. Elite Regular Derby on May 14 and Sweet 11 and June 2. Interested parties may call 911 0181 and 911 0500 for details.

Big gamers unleash prizey birds

TWENTY big cockfighters are set to unleash their millionaire gamebirds when the Big Event Part 10-Cock Derby unfolds on Saturday, May 14 at the air-conditioned Las Vegas Coliseum. Sabong aficionado Patrick Antonio, one of the organizers, said that only invitational derby-in-regime cockers held their own gamebirds. An ace is a more than three years old and have won at least five fights. The event will be hosted by GSBP Rich 888 and sponsored by Magnum. Awarding three-cock fighters are reserved for the reigning champion Barry Barquias and Mukas Sanez. For other inquiries, please contact 911 6648 and 09 9099.

Pampanga battles Makati in finals

THREE Pampanga teamed the nation an early favorite Team Magnolia, 8-4, on Monday to arrange a finals showdown with Team Makati in the Commerce Phase of the TBI 9-Ball Championship League set May 10 at the SM Mandaue.

Pampanga's triumph and Team Magnolia of Arnold "Ali" Almeda out of the National Capital Region finals players and followed Makati, a 6-5 winner over Team Pangasinan, to make it the Five Phase finals.

The finals of this event presented by Tanduay Mandaue in support to Kool, Brunswick, Japa Boss and 200 will be held starting at 5 pm.

Toyota Otis tests Harbour Centre

TOYOTA Otis Lobos will try to bring another heavyweight down today when the Knights collide with Harbour Center in a PBL Unity Cup encounter that could very well point a clearer picture on who will take the outright semifinals seats.

The Knights, majestically a recent huge victory over Welfoot, go into the game 4-1 (6), former PBL Unity Center have an emerging a losses sending loss from the Fort Masters in the first round.

A win gives Lemac a tie for second with the Fort Masters while a win would secure for Harbour Center the second outright spot in the final four phase behind title holder Shoemate Powerhouse.

Meanwhile, Sonny Williams, the dazzling Fil-American included in the national training pool, debuts for smuggling defending champion Magnolia today.

The Ice Cream Wizards duels with winless Sunsaco Sun Bulls in the 2 p.m. contest.

"Our initial target was to finish (the eliminations round) in the top four for a semi-to-four scenario (in the quarterfinals)," coach Leon Alas said after the win over the Dust Masters last Saturday.

"But if the opportunity to make the semifinals outright presents itself, we will definitely grab it."

While journeying the rest of the field have been making a living on offense, the Knights are coming into games with the added out of shutting down their foes.

Arthe Lanong, a discovery from Cebu, is the focal point of the Lemac defense.

"He can defend against anybody, he is a small man, as a big man," Alas said.

Meanwhile Gandhi

Burlington Cup Sunday

THE FOURTH season of the Burlington Friendship Cup, the sage tournament among sports-minded companies, opens Sunday, May 15 at the Philippine Northwestern Academy Sports in Quezon City. The meet will be announced by Family Tan, SM of Burlington Industries Phils. Inc. and Family C. Ronchi of Total Events and Motion Management Global Inc., organizers of the annual project launched by Glenn-ry Village and Aivas and aimed at promoting fitness among employees of participating firms. Leading the list of teams is defending champion Cebu of the Basketeers. Also entered are Metro-ry Magic, Winners Builders, Honda 32, Philippine Sun Alliance/Publishing, Cebu Lions, Epsilon Lighting, LUCK Transport Group, Inc.

Ateneo brings act to Shakey's V-League

ATENEO de Manila University, a school rich in basketball history and tradition, brings its act to the volleyball court as it joins arch rival De La Salle University and four other teams in pursuit of glory in the first conference of the 2005-2006 season of the Shakey's V-League firing off Saturday at the Ateneo Blue Eagle gym.

Although they don't have the depth and experience of the UST Tigresses and the Lady Archers, veterans of the league's first two conferences, the Lyceum-based spikers remain confident of a good showing as they vowed to make an impact on their first stint in the Shakey's football league.

Coach Lude Espinosa has tapped the services of national player Maureen Penetrante from PNOC maintainer Amy Gonzaga and Ira Yuma to reinforce the team, which includes Joel Ulloa, Aiesa Dijour, Trisha Lingasen, Karla Pelle, Iris Gerega, Shiel Gilbuco, Chiee Antonio, Mika Nila, Phil Tapanes, April del Puerto and Charlie Tan, who also saw action last the UAAP in the host conference.

"It is a big plus for the league to have Ateneo in as folk and we're very sure that in every will the their help generate interest in the league," said Emilio "Jun" Bernardino, president of the organizing Sports Vision Management Group, Inc.

"We always believe in YOUR (Ateneo) to bring back the glory days of women's volleyball to Ateneo making the Shakey's V-League a breeding ground for (volleyball) talents," says Shakey's general manager Vic Dimagiba.

The event is backed by BIC 11, Jemali Interiors, ACCEL and Mikasa.

The other teams competing in the double-round elims and double-round semis are San Sebastian, Lyceum and the Eastern University.

Getting down to business

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

PEPING Cojuangco is not only proving to be a man of action. He is also showing some guts, a stance that is vital to a man heading the country's No. 1 position in sports.

When Peping, who is barely in his fifth month as president of the Philippine Olympic Committee (POC), convened a committee to find ways to strengthen the country's sports program, he didn't just say so, so to speak. His move was not only timely. It also infused a new hope for the nation's favorite pastime to finally resurface as a sport no longer wrecked by intrigue, fraud with hidden agenda.

All of these were there. They were and, ing at each level to each other. They believed the bids suddenly lined up, whipped into action, by their deliberation.

It was a fantastic meeting called by Peping to forge a consensus and put an end to the bickering and in fighting that had stalled the game of the sport we had fallen in love with from the day Carlos Loyzaga electrified the world by being hailed Cor the Rhythm's in the 1954 World Basketball Champ- ionship in Brazil.

In the first meeting on April 19, Peping's birthday, all the stakeholders agreed to form a working basketball committee to be headed by Jun Bernardino, a sports executive. Everybody was in high spirits that day, after the gathering, each of them went home wearing a smile.

The April 19 meeting was exhibited when, on April 26, the stakeholders adopted a resolution ratifying on that Basketball Association of the Philippines (BAP) in "retained its full responsibility as the Working Committee of POC president Cojuangco."

All seemed to be going well when, out of nowhere, BAP president Tito Uson picked up with his decision to back away from the consensus forged by Peping. In other words, it's back to square one. BAP is again rolling on, "We do it our own way, the way it used to be."

The part that astounds me is, Uson and his board also lobbied out Go Teng Kok as BAP project director for the 2007 Fil-Am AB- ci Manila. If he's retiring, they said, was he "hoodwinked Uson into signing a statement" that backed the resolution adopted by the basketball working committee headed by Peping Cojuangco. It was owes and that Uson, who was accompanied by his son when shown the document reportedly in the presence of Robert Jaworski and Jerry Codinera, did not read it. Or the glasses were he signed it, they "making it hard for Uson to read the statement being attributed to him" before signing it.

If you can believe all that, then you can also believe that passing does not exist, but rather existed, in this benighted country of ours.

To me, Uson did not even have to sign anything to be first place. The fact that several of his emissaries in the BAP, including his seemingly unshakable secretary general, Graduate Uan, signed their resolution to abide themselves to the decisions made by the working basketball committee headed by Peping Cojuangco, is more than enough proof of BAP's commitment to finally unite with all the nation's stakeholders in basketball.

Maybe they had also been "hoodwinked" into signing the resolution?

Tsss.

The unwitting Jose Peping is impressive session on the BAP should BAP really decide to disbelieve its commitment to the resolution adopted in the meetings of April 19 and April 26 should be fair warning to all. Peping means business.

Now, if only he could know up to new why sports in this country is interrogating instead of progressing, you never really know yesterday.

Tsss.

NATIONAL Magri, the brothers of Mayo and Sadie, nurse four rookie Happy birthday, Miguel... Welcome home to Ting Mabuyo Mendoza and her son, Jesus Bartolay boy turned on, May 13), who both flew in from Toronto on Monday, May 9 to together with Ting's mother, Ita Sison.

InqBox

Question of the Week

More than 90 journalists have been killed in the Philippines since 1986. The Committee to Protect Journalists has identified the Philippines as "the most murderous country for journalists," followed by Iraq, Colombia, Bangladesh and Russia. What should be done to stop the killings?

Senders of at least 20 texts as published in Tuesday's InqBox will each receive an "Inquirer Mug!"

inquirer box
name/age/city/message.
Text your answers to
2388 (Globe) or 288 (Smart).
(Maximum of 160 characters)

*Note: Manila residents can call June at 897 0000. Provincial answers can text or email inquirer.net. Answers received by midnight Wednesday will be published in Thursday's InqBox. Winners can claim their prizes at the Inquirer Building, 5th floor, Marketing Department, Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

SPORTS

Text us your feedback (inquirer.sports@gmail.com/inquirer.sports on YM/Yahoo!, or 2317 Yahoo!, or 2317 Direct)

Editor Tonkyric S. Maleniños

TENNIS. ATP Masters Madrid, 7 p.m. and 10 p.m., ESPN Sports. Catch the second round and the final as it is live up to the French Open.

BASKETBALL. NBA Playoffs – Pistons vs Pacers, Game 2: 8 p.m., Solar Sports; Mavs vs Suns, Game 2: 10:30 p.m., RPN 9 - The NBA Conference Semifinals continue with these pair of Game 2 encounters.

Aces whip Red Bull

ALASKA 103# (Jayson Castro/Jeff Cortez)
4 p.m.—Galeries Tower 6:30 p.m.—Alaska vs Red Bull

By June Navarro

MIKE Cortez posted double-double figures last night to offset the absence of Brandon Cuttler as Alaska prevailed over Red Bull Barako, 98-87, in the 2005 Fruit Maiden PBA Fiesta Conference at the Araneta Coliseum.

Cortez shot 17 points and issued a conference-high 13 assists in 39 minutes to spearhead the Aces' De La Salle stand out didn't actually come up with when Cuttler was ejected.

"The story of the day was not about the game. It was about freedom (Cuttler)," said Alaska coach Tim Cone after the Aces notched their sixth victory after 14 games.

The play (Cortez) 98-87 victory over Talk N Text in the second game, gave the Aces a share of the lead with the Phone Pals.

The Bulldogs climbed to a tie with Sta. Lucia at 7-7.

Cuttler was all right foreign-level Alaska players who traded their temporary ass. possession after sustaining with the documentary requirements of the league, got injured ironically on the day he and his Fil-Am teammates were interviewed by the PBA.

The 6-foot Cuttler fractured a bone in his left hand in the 3rd Yeats 8-minutes Gene Vasquez's losing game against the Sail-Boy Kings Tuesday.

"It was bad luck that he got hurt. But I we think that it has something to do for the greater good like playing for the country we'll not be disappointed anymore," said Cone of Cuttler, who will sit it, out for at least three weeks.

The Aces also noted their eighth defeat in 14 games.

ALASKA 98—Jimpoy 20, Cortez 17, Dalupan 14, Abarrientos 11, Pettiford 10, Yeng 7, Yeng 6, Reyes 4, Wilson 2, Jamon 0, Ignacio 0, Ilustre 0.

RED BULL 87—Arboleda 18, Villanueva 15, Quinto 12, Wahl 8, Andaya 7, Tagle 6, Ibanez 4, Ildefonso 3, Valencia 3, Jones 2, Robinson 2, Ingacio 0.

Quarters: 20-22, 43-38, 73-65, 98-87.

ALASKA'S Mike Cortez tries to go against Red Bull's CJ Feihl.

POC left us out in the cold–BAP

By Marvyn B. Corotiz

THE BASKETBALL Association of the Philippines yesterday made it clear that it is not "scrapping" on its agreement with the basketball governing committee of the Philippine Olympic Committee.

In a matter of fact, Filoteano "Boy" Caldiero, the former baseball icon and VP of the BAP for the Visayas, pointed out that it is the PBA and the POC which have violated the agreement of the April 19 and 20 basketball summits.

"We are the ones being left out in the cold," Caldiero said. "The agreement clearly stated that the BAP will be involved in a joint committee. And what is that joint committee now?

"It has only three Chot Reyes) here, Chot there, Saben Reyes (Tamsi, the BAP appointed coach) gone to the previous summit, he is ignored," Caldiero said. "So tell me, where is the involvement of the BAP there?"

Caldiero said the BAP despised the fact that they were bypassed when Reyes, the appointed coach of the POC working committee, put aspirants into the national training pool without even asking them the three steps.

"They've been choosing and adding players to the 30 team pool without clearance from us. Eh, one his summon letter, ano ba? What are we here for?"

"Of course we need the PBA, because when we go to bigger tournaments like the Asian Games we need their players," Caldiero added. "But we cannot see how can we be involved when we are not part of the joint committee that would form the team."

Meanwhile, POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco yesterday got full support from the executive committee in his bid to outlit the BAP vote. Cojuangco was given authority to levy penalties on the BAP if it violated the Olympic rule.

RP 5 eyes Champions Cup, US stint

ARMS: Tough task in choosing final 12.

By Francis Ochoa

AFTER exhibition games against Iran and and Australia, national coach Chot Reyes and the ISP running pool-prepare for its first international competition against Asian teams, some of which will be backed up by American imports.

And there the big thing...a team- more against NBA squads.

The national training pool will join the Asian Basketball Confederation (ABC) Champions Cup which the country will host starting May 16.

"We are ready for the hosting and the success of the staging shall commence to immediately to the country's bid to host the 2007 Fiba International basketball federation) has championship for men, which is the qualifier for the 2008 Beijing Olympics," said Basketball Association of the Philippines (BAP) executive vice president Chitmon Tan.

The Champions Cup actually kicks off a four schedule for the training pool, that will be highlighted by its participation in an NBA summer league tournament in Las Vegas in July, where the Philippines will play against NBA squads and even familiar foes from the Asian hoop scene.

"Every player there, Iranian players there and a lot of NBA coaches (play there)," Reyes said of the Las Vegas pro-tournament. "It's the] summer league 1st NBA tested, where they try out rookies and free agents."

Reyes has already secured an invitation from the Las Vegas organizers and forwarded it to the PBA board for approval.

"Our problem now is getting practice time," said Reyes. "Our practice (until May 31 and before our rumble na lang, Champions Cup na."

"That's another good competition, Iran is bringing in their 7 foot 5 guy, Jordan will be playing with us, guys. We're going to be playing Al-Filipino so it's going to be a really good test for us."

Actually, teams in the Champions Cup usually field American imports.

"It's now going to be a difficult task for the coaching staff to pick the 12 players for the Champions Cup. The 12 we will pick for the Champions Cup is not the team we will be

Team Iguana still up with perfect run

By Jasmine W. Payo

PARAÑAQUE—Amid the massive Dominican hordes of Cultus Cares, Team Iguana kept its lead on Day 4 of the Island Paradise Adventure Race here in Cagayan province on Tuesday night.

Team Iguana maintained its no sweat effort in passing by the checkpoints, completing all tasks and finishing the fourth stage at the prescribed time of five hours and 32 minutes.

But the leading veteran adventure racers still remained cautious as the grueling nine-day race only moves in its next pit stop in Lasag, Buguey Norte.

"There are close a lot of teams closing in," said Andrew Christiaan Jr., who teams up strong runners with with Giselle Bernabe and Dennis Asanza. "A lot of things can still happen. We still have a long way to go and the rankings can change in an instant."

Model Ilke Diaz, JC Lucero and Mary Grace Piot finished in the top contenders' slot after Manila City Bankrady to keep second spot with 11 elements points.

Other teams posting perfect scores in this stage were national triathlon record-holder Wesley Aspuria, Asequin Alonso and Nikki Abanilla of Valgo, who kept third spot in a four-banger with 14 distinct points; Intelly-planet Carlo Gambitenzos, Bucky Garcia and Bayer Philippines-2 believers, who had the 16-mark points to their Toyota Rav 4; and Team Tribu's Jerome, Jason and Nestanie Lanuza, with 22 elements in a Dodge Dakota. Cebu Black Shama, however, pulled out of the protest-marred stage, leaving only 13 teams to vie for the P1 million grand prize.

Haggard-off in Barobbong, Nueva Vizcaya, the racers drove to several check-points in hotels including the Balay Rita-matis in Santiago City, Camp Vicente Lindsay Park in Tuguegarao and Tuguegarao Church, before reaching the finish line at the Callao Cave in Peñablanca, Cagayan.

"There weren't too many physical tasks in this stage, but the mind challenges were finding directions," said the 31-year-old Bernabe after Team Iguana arrived at the pit stop first. "One of my concessions was fatalities with the area so that was our advantage."

The 22,000-kilometer Canon leg organized by the Department of Tourism requires racers to drive through tourist destinations at a set time and completes several physical and mental challenges. Teams are assessed point deductions for any time delay or failure to complete a task correctly.

ROCKY Bancale of Team Sideways during the cave challenge in Callao Cave, Peñablanca, Cagayan. RYAN LAGOS

NCR sustains Palaro drive

By Marc Anthony Reyes

BAGUIO CITY—Reinforced Capital Region pulled away in the medal race with Ilocos Norte on its swimming and athletics performance but it was the sensational record performance of a local boy which caught everybody's fancy in the Palarong Pambansa at the Baldo Sports Complex here.

NCR boosted its collection of gold medals to nine midday on top of 10 others and 12 bronzes to both the secondary and elementary competitions with Caloocan's and host Western Visayas trailing with 11-11-7 and 8-9-11 gold-silver-bronze tallies, respectively.

But under the new point system for this year's edition, the individual events won't be carrying a set of weights than the team contests where 400 and Caloocan are exposed to dominate.

The day's most brilliant feat came from Iloilo's Marlon Arbo, who led an impressive assault of the 1997 Palaro record in the secondary boys' 400-meter hurdles of Dennis Blanco and Southern Tagalog.

Cheered by the huge hometown crowd, Arbo hurtled like a runaway train to win in 57.1 seconds with the next four runners behind him also surpassing the old 58.1 record.

Arbo' PW teammate John Jay Bravo took the silver in 57.5 seconds, Caloocan's Jomar Mesa was third at 58.1 and Antonio Simondo of Bicol and Carl Marlon Sanchez of Central Luzon were fourth and fifth with similar clockings of 58.2.

Clifford John Bonjoc of Central Visayas also wowed a set when he leaped third spot in a fast 15-player with 14 distinct points. Intelly-planet Carlo Gambitenzos, Bucky Garcia and Bayer Philippines-2 believers, who had the 16-mark points to their Toyota Rav 4; and Team Tribu's Jerome, Jason and Nestanie Lanuza, with 22 elements in a Dodge Dakota. Cebu Black Shama, however, pulled out of the protest-marred stage, leaving only 13 teams to vie for the P1 million grand prize.

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REGION 4-A Caloocan's Mabrel Mariano leaps to earned place in the long jump of the athletics competition. JAY YUMOL

RP pool headed in right direction, says Aussie coach

By Francis Dimas

HE KNOWS the international game so well, having coached the Australian national squad in the Athens Olympics.

And all Brian Goorjian needed was one look at the Philippine national training pool on Game One Chot Reyes is headed in the right direction.

"When the Philippines lacks a star," Goorjian said. "International-ally, I was with Japan and you look at Shiga and you look at Nakata—they're good—two or three seven-footers [like] Yao Ming, Ilustrer [Shergio]."

"The style [Chot Reyes] is trying to develop with the running of the ball and the running and the ball movement—if you have somebody like a Yao Ming chasing you around, [then] the Philippines is playing to its advantage."

Impressive style

Goorjian studied the reigning Australian league champion Ilustrer Ginebra in a sweep of the two halves at the national training pool Monday and Tuesday and was impressed with the style of play the team was trying to develop.

"I think the coach is doing a good job of developing a style that will make your country competitive as a small team," he explained. "They [do] a good job executing offense and running stuff."

Team A of the training pool lost to the Kings, 85-58, Game II, which was headed with each of Ginebra's players Jayjay Helterbrand, Sunday Salgado, Yeng Guiao, Willie Miller, lent to a fully-rested and better prepared Sydney squad, 104-91.

"Team #1 did stuff one-on-one and made plays especially in the fourth quarter when they needed a comeback," Goorjian said. [Team #] had trouble finding resistance to score. [Team #] had to

Fighting spirit

"With those two teams, if you pick 10 players, you can come up with good quickness and guys who can really shoot the ball," said Goorjian. "[With a combined team], I think they would have been in the first nine. I would have hoped for a split."

Even the Australian players who have had experience internationally were impressed with the RP pool.

"They're competitive and they have a lot of fighting spirit," said Brett Wheeler, a 24-year-old big man who once played for the Australian national men's team.

Shooter Bradley Sheridan said the Filipinos seem "on the right track. I think you have a very good basketball foundation here."

"They've got very good athletes and really talented players," said Daniel Kickert, a former player of Australia's junior squad like Sheridan.

Better than China

Before returning to the Philippines, the Sydney Kings topped the Singapore Cup, where they had a chance to battle against club teams from China, Korea and Jordan. Goorjian said the Philippine pool was "better than the Chinese team and they were better than the Korean team we played."

"But the Jordan team, I think, was a little better," said Goorjian, noting, however, that the last two teams were hampered by their import tournaments. "We played quite a few international teams and this was one of the better teams we played."

RP-BAP team faces Taguig today

VALOR.—The beleaguered RP-BAP men's training team will be out to prove its mettle today when it goes up against unbeaten Taguig in the 2005 Panasonic-NBC national basketball championships at the CCP Tiaga grass here.

Coach Boyet Zamar's cagers, who are preparing for the Stanka championship next month in Singapore, are expected to have their hands full against Mayor Freddie Tinga's boys in the 6 p.m. contest.

Formerly known as RP-Coburna Distillers, Zamar's squad is a guest team to the tourney sponsored by Panasonic, Avid, Mobex, Spring Cooling Oil, Subgate Glass, Hubtronics, Cebu Pacific, Sunkoh Energy Drink, Nanette's Spring, Air Euro-pe Insurance, Shape Motorcycles, Sirtec Solutions Providers, Wine Channel, Ping Ping Ice Bars, Bayantel, Park Hotel and Holiday Plaza Cebu.

Zamar, whose team's shooting test to Pinoybasque Jose in the pre-season led to its disbanding, hasn't his plans to get the Marinerals to play 35 tune-up games before the Stanka tilt.

The team's stalwarts are RC Candelaria, Paco Moore, Georgie Timar, Ishtick Ilarmo, Deandre Villanueva, Rafael Dickerson, Dennis Miralles, Rhic Lazarenos, Ruben dela Rosa, Francis Saez, Chris Cantonjos and Ricky Calimag.

Chris at the HBDU Bigtas Institute of Technology [game vs Tigers, Mayor Lawrence Cruz's Cavaliers will host the Rizal Memorial Colleges Basketball League facility Robert Dy also at 6 p.m. today.

U-Ha battles Sphere for RIFA girls trophy

JESSICA Ilyan struck the back of the net twice to lift the U-Ha Girls FC to a 2-1 victory over Interstate Concepcion Academy to advance to the finals of the 10, 8-a-side summer football tournament at the Miriam girls' residence.

Miss Gandang and Ian Richards, the other hand, scored a goal apiece to lead Interstate San Agustin Viral Center to a 2-1 win against Miriam College's Under-18 squad.

The championship is at 4:30 p.m. today, also at the Miriam girls' in the side match. Aphner will host an Inf. B' team journals—keeper Raya Bacera, Mark Phan (Jelmar), Sam Marcus (midfield) and Ian Marcus Bacera.

The line-up expected to be the target of U-Ha defenders in their semifinal's showdown.

Aphner had earlier crowned Miriam, 6-1, and their local U-Ha, 2-nil to enter the semifinal round and top the group stage of the tournament.

Bob Mathis, head coach for Miriam, is the organizer and tournament commissioner.

Camel race visits Visayas

THE GAME. Superstar International Championship series 2005 returns to the limelight with the staging of two more series packed legs in the Western cities of Iloilo and Bacolod this June 12-19.

Now on its 13th year, the event will be held once in the Ilo, Iloilo's International Raceway in Iloilo City on May 22 and the Talisay Stadium in Bacolod City on June 19.

The races are now open to the successful legs in Pasay City and Bacolod City held late last year as part of Camel's 13th anniversary anniversary.

"We're very happy to hold two more races of the Camel Superstar series in the Visayas," said JC International Phils. Brand marketing manager Edward A. Ortiz.

Spicing up this year's competitions is the participation of top international superstars from other countries expected to provide strong challenge to the Filipino contingent, led by eight-time national champion Henri Aguilar, Jovie Sandoval Bobet de la Cruz.

National Motorcycle Sports and Safety Association (NAMMSAFE) president Rick Yabut said the victory of Tadalavir Omsbar of Japan over James Robinson of New Zealand in the finals race and Chaiyan Bamphan of Thailand in the Bacolod race is expected to raise the level of competition.

JOVIE Sandoval in an tough competition.

AF3 race: Sy charges from last to third

TYSON Sy (at rear) with co-team and friend Krista Bautista in the photo taken during the AF3 first leg at the Batangas Racing Circuit.

RISING star Tyson Sy finished fifth for the race and skipper fourth round 3 for Asian Formula Three Series 2005, which was held at the Bataan International Circuit in Guanglong, China, recently.

The 17-year-old Filipino, who failed to start in Round 2 after his engine lost a cylinder in qualifying and couldn't be replaced in time, was forced to start Round 4 from 14th and last.

Sy quickly climbed to the top 10 and took advantage of the chaos on turn one to secure his way through the running course of cars that included competitors Simon Morales, Enzo Bravo, JP Tuason, Dodo Arias and 2000 AF3 champion Japan Masaru Ireland's Jolan O'Hara, Jason Wanderer of the UK, Mauro Sagrippo of Indonesia, Bahrul Eng Murphy and Rodolfo Arbor of Macau.

On the approach to Turn 10, Sy the 2004 Philippine National Formula 3 champion, surprised his rival to take third spot behind 2004 AF3 titlist Christian Jones of Australia and Indonesian Ananda Mikola.

Jones stayed in the lead even as Sy shared down some leader Mikola around the 6.1 km. long track until he was just a few meters behind. With the track drying out, however, Sy elected to wait sooner and secure valuable points in the championship. The trio kept their positions until the checkered flag.

Sy I closed in on Ananda I remembered my brush with O'Hara is dangerous that put me out of the race," Sy said. "I decided that securing points was more important than trying to take second place away from him, so I simply backed off. After all, there are still eight rounds to go in the series."

RP 5 . . .

From page A13

retaking to the ABC [tournament]."

The ABC championships serves as qualifier for the World Championships and the Olympics.

"The Champion's Cup will be treated as an invitational meet where we can find out where we stand in relation [to] Beijing," Reyes explained.

After the Champions Cup, and the Las Vegas tournament, the training pool will also face the Jones Cup in August. There is also the FIBA pool will tournament and an exhibition event in Brunei. After that, its off to Qatar for the 4th [championship] qualifying tournament.

The draw of the Champions Cup will be held today at the Wine affair at Shada Lounge, and PAP secretary general Graham Lim.

Defending champion Lebanon, Kazakhstan, Syria, Iran, Korea, Jordan, Qatar, India and Kuwait are the other countries joining the event.

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B1
BUSINESS

Editor Raul G. Marvais
Assistant Editor Corrie S. Mariano

Finance urges DOJ to act on tax evasion cases

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance has called on the Department of Justice to speed up the prosecuting of tax evasion cases against high-profile individuals to raise the credibility of the government's anti-tax evasion drive.

Finance Undersecretary for Internal Revenue said the DOF was hoping the justice department would put on high priority the filing of tax evasion cases with the Court of Tax Appeals (CTA), saying conviction of duty to pay proper taxes was a major cause of the country's growing fiscal problem.

The DOF together with its attached agency the Bureau of Internal Revenue, launched the SOTC (tax-all-in tax resident) program last March. Under the program, the two agencies file tax evasion charges against known businesses or celebrities with the DOJ every month to improve upon the public that tax evasion is a serious offense, and that the government is no longer taking it lightly.

Under legal parameters, after a government agency such as the DOF files the cases with the DOJ, the latter will have to go to court to affidavits from the respondents and then file the complaints with the appropriate courts. With regard to tax evasion cases under the SOTC program, charges have to be filed with the CTA. On court-related with hearing on related cases involving liabilities of at least P1 million.

The DOJ often takes several months or even more than a year to file charges with the appropriate courts.

"We expressed our concern with the DOJ that we want quick, or moreover time for cases to be filed with the CTA. sixty days is reasonable," he said.

Soccoro said the DOF got a favorable response from the DOJ. He said the DOJ earlier said it would form a team composed of 20 lawyers to deal primarily with the tax evasion cases filed under the SOTC program.

Revenue Deputy Commissioner for Prosecution Lewis Evangelista said the DOJ was already looking at filing the first SOTC case with the CTA next month. He said the DOJ also had given the commitment to focus on the tax evasion cases filed by the DOF such as SOTC.

The BIR said it had recorded improvements in tax collections since the SOTC program was launched. It said earlier that last April 15, the revenue agency collected P12.39 billion. The BIR's biggest amount of collection for a single day. The amount was also 92.9 percent higher than the P14.77 billion it collected on April 15, 2004.

Revenue Commissioner Guillermo Parayno Jr. said the significant improvement in tax collection was likely due to the tax-consciousness on tax obligations as promoted by the SOTC program.

CONTINUED ON

Currencies

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

$1 = P54.100
As of 5 p.m. (May 11, 2005)

$1 = 101.20 yen
As of 5 p.m. (May 11, 2005)

GOLD: $416.80/t oz

United States	Dollar	1.77000	1.80000
Japan	Yen	0.00000	0.00000
United Kingdom	Pound	1.00000	1.00000
Hongkong	Dollar	0.00000	0.00000
Netherlands	Euro	0.00000	0.00000
Canada	Dollar	0.00000	0.00000
Singapore	Dollar	0.00000	0.00000
Australia	Dollar	0.00000	0.00000
Switzerland	Franc	0.00000	0.00000
Bahrain	Dinar	0.00000	0.00000
Saudi Arabia	Riyal	0.00000	0.00000
Brunei	Dollar	0.00000	0.00000
Kuwait	Dinar	0.00000	0.00000
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.00000	0.00000
Thailand	Baht	0.00000	0.00000
Qatar	Riyal	0.00000	0.00000
Oman	Rial	0.00000	0.00000
Italy	Euro	0.00000	0.00000
Germany	Euro	0.00000	0.00000
Argentina	Peso	0.00000	0.00000
Mexico	Peso	0.00000	0.00000
Sweden	Krona	0.00000	0.00000
Denmark	Krone	0.00000	0.00000
Norway	Krone	0.00000	0.00000
Austria	Euro	0.00000	0.00000
Belgium	Euro	0.00000	0.00000
Finland	Euro	0.00000	0.00000
France	Euro	0.00000	0.00000
Greece	Euro	0.00000	0.00000
Ireland	Euro	0.00000	0.00000
Portugal	Euro	0.00000	0.00000
Spain	Euro	0.00000	0.00000
Taiwan	Dollar	0.00000	0.00000
South Korea	Won	0.00000	0.00000
India	Rupee	0.00000	0.00000
Sri Lanka	Rupee	0.00000	0.00000
Nepal	Rupee	0.00000	0.00000
Pakistan	Rupee	0.00000	0.00000
Bangladesh	Taka	0.00000	0.00000
Fiji	Dollar	0.00000	0.00000
Papua New Guinea	Kina	0.00000	0.00000
New Zealand	Dollar	0.00000	0.00000
Vietnam	Dong	0.00000	0.00000
Cambodia	Riel	0.00000	0.00000
Laos	Kip	0.00000	0.00000
Myanmar	Kyat	0.00000	0.00000
Brazil	Real	0.00000	0.00000
Chile	Peso	0.00000	0.00000
Colombia	Peso	0.00000	0.00000
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.00000	0.00000

Stock Market

Shares close 0.51% lower

Ayala consolidates transport businesses

Interest Rates

Roles of the game

BREAKTIME

Conrado B. Bonoan III

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CAP gets SEC nod on equity deal

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission (SEC) has given embattled gas-to-power firm Cullego Asia-now Phil Pacific Inc. (CAP)-the go-ahead to pursue a deal that would bring in roughly P1 billion in new funding from its Dutch investor, Intercontinental Global Capital Holdings NV (IGCH), reliable sources in the corporate watchdog said yesterday.

The sources said, however, that the SEC required that money to be raised from CAP's proposed issuance of an "asset subscription receipt" (ASR) to IGCH would go to the company's most hard and used to pay plant facilities.

CAP's trust fund stands at P4.7 billion. The ASRC, which simply verifies that CAP holds in its possession some $150 million worth of IGCT bonds, would trigger the release of the core funds to CAP.

The IGCH does not encumber CAP's assets to the investor.

Once the IGCH is issued to IGH, the Dutch firm will then put in new equity to replenish CAP's shrinking trust fund over a certain period.

Once cleared by the SEC, CAP will issue P1 billion worth of preferred shares to IGCH in exchange for the same amount of new capital, CAP Director Robert John Dobrzynski said.

CAP will also have to seek the SEC's approval to raise its capital to P1 billion from P500 million.

Dobrzynski added that there was another local bank waiting to inject cash of P1 billion into CAP in exchange for preferred shares. This would allow the bank to expand its branch network through CAP's over 70 offices nationwide.

CAP earlier said that IGCH was willing to infuse $123 million into CAP's re-exchange for preferred shares. IGCH may also acquire new board seat. The infusion, equivalent to roughly P675 million, would address part of the first instalment's P1.2 billion in tuition requirements.

To make the deal possible, CAP's creditor bank has written the SEC to seek approval of its equity deal with IGCH.

The second tranche's requirement of P1.2 billion will be covered by the possible sale of CAP assets, including its 1,000-hectare property housing the CAP Building in Ilocos and shares of stock.

ICTSI Q1 profit soared 66%

From page B1

during the first quarter, an increase of 12 percent from 397,198 TEUs handled in the same period in 2004.

Including volume handled by affiliate Seaside Container Transport Pte. Services Inc., the cargo handler at the Port of General Santos, group-wide volume at the close of the first quarter was 488,626 TEUs, an increase of 11 percent over the previous year's 423,934 TEUs.

In Brazil, TISA continued to deliver significant improvements in volumes for the quarter, registering a 25-percent growth over the previous year. The MICT accounted for the bulk of consolidated volume, with first-quarter business growing by 14 percent from last year.

Another foreign subsidiary, Subic Container Terminal (SCT) in Poland, posted a 4-percent growth in volume compared to the prior year.

Consolidated gross revenues from port operations increased by 19 percent to 2.37 billion from 1.99 billion reported for the first quarter of 2004.

Net revenues, or income from port operations after deducting port authority share, amounted to P1.7 billion, an increase of 22 percent over the same period last year. Port authorities' share represents fees and payments to the respective port authorities for each of the terminals operated by ICTSI. Total port authorities' share in revenues grew by 19 percent to P670 million, from P486 million last year.

Total consolidated operating expenses increased by 11 percent due principally to higher expenses at subsidiary MCT resulting from a strengthening in the Euro (Poland's currency) relative to both the US dollar and the peso; higher electricity and fuel cost recorded at the MICT; and increased projects-related costs by subsidiary ICTSI Ltd. in connection with the growth in the company's international portfolio.

In the first quarter, ICTSI invested P115 million in continue expanding the handling capacity and improving operating efficiency of its three main facilities. ICTSI said it expects to make further investments in these facilities throughout the remainder of the year.

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

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Stick to bancassurance framework, banks told

TETANGCO

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas has reminded banks that they are not allowed to sell pre-need plans under the bancassurance framework.

Banks, according to the BSP are allowed only to cross-sell specific insurance products of affiliates.

Amid the anxiety over big pre-need companies that got into financial troubles such as College Assurance Plan Philippines Inc. and Pacific Plans Inc., the BSP called on banks to stick to the rules under the bancassurance framework.

"That (selling pre-need) is not in accordance with our regulations," BSP officer in charge Armando Tetangco told reporters.

Pre-need plans refer to products that cover foreseeable expenditures in life in, turn such as retirement, education and even funeral arrangements.

BSP Deputy Governor for bank supervision Nestor Espenilla Jr. said the department has a list of products that banks could sell under the bancassurance model but pre-need plans were not among them.

"We have a restriction on the products that banks can sell, including insurance products and credit cards. Also, they are allowed to sell only products of their affiliates," Espenilla explained.

To be considered an affiliate, the bank should have a minimum ownership of 51 percent in the interested company or vice versa, he stressed.

The cross-selling of products under the bancassurance model has been allowed since 2000, when the BSP allowed Bank of the Philippine Islands to acquire the insurance companies of the Ayala group.

Those companies, all under the Ayala Insurance Holdings Corp., were FGU Insurance Corp., Universal Reinsurance Corp., Ayala Life Assurance, Ayala Health Care and Ayala Plans. FGU Insurance was later merged with FEB Mitsui Marine Insurance Co. and is now known as the BPI/MS Insurance Corp.

The cross-selling of insurance products has emerged as another revenue-generating option for banks in Asia.

In the case of the pre-need industry, the sector has grown rapidly in the Philippines over the past few years but was recently besieged by the financial troubles encountered by some of its major players.

The marketability of education plans, according to UAP and PetNet Plans, was adversely affected by the deregulation of tuition fees charged by private schools.

Pacific Plans Inc., a member of the Technologic Group of Companies, earlier filed for a suspension of payments, creating panic among existing stockholders. It earlier registered to viable plans and terminated, there is another YGC member-company called Lifetime Plans.

VAT measure seen to improve gov't tax collection efficiency

By Michelle V. Rivera

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance said the soon-to-be enacted value-added tax bill would not only raise additional revenue for the cash-strapped government, but will also help deter cases of VAT evasion.

Finance Undersecretary Emmanuel Buenaventura said the lifting of VAT exemptions—such as those on oil, power, and legal and medical services—would place more businesses in the VAT chain. This, he said, would help the government track VAT liabilities through the input-output credit feature of the VAT system.

He said it was the exemptions that hindered the tax collection efficiency.

"Now that there is likelihood the VAT bill will become a law, everyone in business will be linked to each other, so efficiency in collection will definitely improve," he said in an interview with reporters.

The government's current VAT collection efficiency was estimated at only 75 percent. The figure means that 30 percent of the taxpayers' VAT liabilities are not being remitted to the government.

The National Tax Research Center, a research agency attached to the Department of Finance, earlier said the government lost an average of P38.7 billion per year from 1999 to 2002. It explained that, for the said period, the average potential VAT collection per year was P111 billion, but actual VAT collection averaged at only P82 billion.

The NTRC attributed the gap to the alleged under-declaration of sales and excessive claims of input VAT credits.

Also, the BSP earlier said the government lost P146 billion from VAT leakages in 2003. The government collected only P335 billion in VAT during the year, much lower than the P479 billion it had expected.

The DOF said that with the lifting of the VAT exemptions, the revenue leakage would be reduced and the collection efficiency rate would improve.

"Anything over 75 percent is realistic," said Romero.

Romero said that while the VAT bill has yet to be signed into law, the DOF and the Bureau of Internal Revenue were already preparing the draft implementing rules and regulations. He said it also should the bill be signed into law in the next few days, it would take effect on July 1.

Aside from the lifting of the VAT exemptions, the bill will also give President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo a standby authority to take the VAT rate from 10 to 12 percent in 2006. The President will have the power to raise the VAT rate if the national government's budget deficit this year will exceed 1.5 percent of the country's gross domestic product.

27 % GROWTH IN REVENUES/ PROFIT

Baiñares Land Corp. reported to its stockholders a 27 percent growth in its net income to P928.2 million last year from P676.4 million in the previous year. During BLC's recent stockholders' meeting, company officials (from left) Frederick Dy Go, (executive vice president), Lance Y. Gokongwei (president), Jose L. Gotianun (chairman) and James L. Go (chair) said the growth could be attributed to efficient cost management and brisk business in the four divisions of the company—commercial centers division, high rise buildings division, housing and land development division, and hotels. These divisions contributed 39 percent, 21 percent, 9 percent and 11 percent to the company's gross revenue, respectively.

DTI steps up price monitoring operations

By Roland W. Dorotiga

THREE should be no sharp hikes in the prices of basic goods even with the recently approved P1 increase in transport fares, according to the Department of Trade and Industry.

Trade Secretary Jose O. Isidro said the fare hike would have no direct impact on the price of basic commodities "since these goods are normally transported by middlemen who use their own vehicles and who have already taken into account the current fuel prices."

The Land Transportation and Franchising Regulatory Board approved on Monday the fare increase amid the continuing increases in fuel prices.

The decision, which will take effect on May 26, brings the basic fare for jeepneys to P7.50 and the fares without air-conditioning to P8 for the first four kilometers.

Isidro said he had ordered DTI units to step up their monitoring activities, particularly on changes in the prices of basic goods.

The trade chief warned that the DTI would continue to protect consumers against profiteers who would take advantage of the LTFRB ruling and use it as an excuse to jack up prices.

"Although the DTI maintains the position that market forces should dictate the prices, it is mandated to look after the welfare of consumers and would not hesitate to go after profiteers," Isidro said.

In particular, the DTI operates under the Consumer Act and The Price Act with regard to monitoring prices of basic goods.

The Price Act defines as profiteering an increase of more than 10 percent in the prices of commodities as compared to prices in a given previous month.

Lara Velarde, former Malacañang Executive Secretary who proposed to Malacañang the creation of a special task force to monitor and regulate the pricing of "socially sensitive" products like liquefied petroleum gas, cooking oil, sweeteners and school supplies.

Under the Price Act, price controls or ceilings should be imposed if there was widespread price manipulation or during a state of emergency, calamity, war, rebellion or martial law.

Anti-piracy drive making headway, says OMB chief

THE COUNTRY continues to make a headway in its fight against intellectual property rights violations even as the Optical Media Board (OMB) seems to work more closely with the private sector and other government agencies in addressing the piracy problem.

"It has been quite a year, but we're just beginning," said OMB chair Edwardo "Eddy" Maruzano.

Maruzano said a more focused and dedicated campaign is now underway as video and optical subsets piracy last year resulted in record raids and several confiscations, including the confiscation of 9.5 tons of pirated DVDs last June at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) and 46 million worth of optical discs last December.

"The OMB has been continuously working to improve the coordination with other government agencies like the Intellectual Property Office, Bureau of Customs, the Philippine National Police, the National Bureau of Investigation, as well as private companies," Maruzano said.

Maruzano cited the close coordination between the OMB and the IPO as an example of a successful collaborative effort that produced positive results. "The IPO, under director general Adrian Cristobal Jr., is a critical partner of the OMB in the campaign to curb and eventually eliminate piracy in the country. We hope to have similar working frameworks with other agencies like BOC under Commissioner Jiggy Arevalo," Maruzano said.

The OMB, the predecessor of the Videogram Regulatory Board (VRB), was created in February 2003 through the Optical Media Act (RA 9239) in response to technological advances like CD and DVD writers which made it easier to produce pirated products commercially.

The RA 9239 regulates the importing, manufacturing, importation and export of optical discs regardless of content and CD burners and the commercial purposes; allows the OMB to deputize local executives and private organizations to help monitor compliance and report violations; empowers OMB agents to apply for search warrants, raid optical media, equipment and equipment and prosecute violators; and imposes fines and penalties against violators.

Penalties under RA 9239 range from 30-90 days of imprisonment and fines of up to P50,000 for "knowing possession for the purpose of sale, rental, distribution, other commercial purpose of pirated material items of the same content" to imprisonment of 3-6 years and fines up to P1.5 million for "importing, exporting, acquiring, selling, distributing, possessing, operating equipment, parts and accessories without license" and "transacting, manufacturing, replicating optical media or mastering intellectual property without authority or source identification code (SID)."

Maruzano said optical media piracy was a multibillion peso business. Losses from piracy for the movie industry alone, last year were estimated to close to P20 billion. The estimated total income losses for the gaming software industry was P2.25 billion. "This is the kind of money that piracy takes away from legitimate businesses both local and foreign," he said.

Philippine National Bank

NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of Stockholders of the Philippine National Bank will be held on May 24, 2004 at 9:00 a.m. at the Ballroom, Upper Lobby, Century Park Hotel, 599 Pedro Gil corner Dr. M. Marate, Manila.

The agenda for the meeting is as follows:

1. Call to Order
2. Secretary's Proof of Notice and Quorum
3. Approval of the Minutes of the 2004 Annual Stockholders' Meeting held on May 26, 2004
4. Report of the President on the Results of Operations for the Year 2004
5. Approval of the 2004 Annual Report
6. Ratification of All Acts and Proceedings of the Board of Directors and Executive Officers since the 2004 Annual Stockholders' Meeting
7. Election of Directors
8. Appointment of External Auditor
9. Other Matters
10. Adjournment

Minutes of the 2004 Annual Stockholders' Meeting as well as resolutions of the Board of Directors from May 25, 2004 will be available for examination during office hours at the Office of the Corporate Secretary.

Only stockholders of record as of April 25, 2004 will be entitled to notice of and vote at this meeting. Registration will begin at 8:00 a.m.

If you cannot personally attend the meeting, you may designate your authorized representative by submitting a PROXY to the Office of the Corporate Secretary not later than 5:00 p.m. on May 19, 2004. Any proxy not received will be validated on May 20, 2004, 9:30 a.m., at the Office of the Stock Transfer Agent at Allied Bank Center, 6754 Ayala Avenue, Makati City.

Pasay City, March 4, 2004

(SGD.) PRIMITIVO J. FERNANDEZ
Corporate Secretary

End of SIM-swap promo to save Smart, Globe P2.5B a year

By Clarissa S. Batino

MOBILE phone makers Smart Communications Inc. and Globe Telecom Inc. are likely to save about P2.5 billion a year once they completely stop their costly SIM-swap promos.

Globe president Gerardo Ablaza said the savings were estimated at about P600 million each quarter or P2.5 billion a year.

Smart's head of legal affairs Ruphil Orig-oden said his company would likely realize similar savings without the SIM-swap offer.

Both telcos are worried that earnings this year could be eroded by a host of challenges, including rising inflation and increasing taxes.

"We have the same subscribers just moving from one network to the other. So the savings of our competitors applies to us also," said Quevedo.

Other sources, however, believed that Smart would tend to realize higher savings as it had been more aggressive in pushing the SIM-swaps.

The prospective savings will help offset the expected softening of revenue arising from declining sales and subscriber take-up. Smart president Napoleon Nazareno said his company had been spending a lot on the SIM swaps.

Cost cutting might mean more to Globe after its expenses rose up 24 percent in the first quarter to P6.4 billion while revenue grew by only 5 percent.

Smart's expenses reached P6.6 billion or up by 6 percent from P7.06 billion in the first quarter last year, while revenue improved by 14 percent.

Ablaza said Globe had stopped the SIM promos in the wake of the month while Smart said it would completely end the offer by May 31.

Third player Sun Cellular said it had long stopped offering its SIM to subscribers of competitors.

Ablaza said he asked the first quarter with 20.2 million customers, Globe with 12.9 million and Sun Cellular with 1.7 million. Smart and Globe said they do not want subscribers who do not top up within a month.

Industry sources estimated that about 3 to 4 million subscribers had been moving from one network to another almost every month to take advantage of the SIM swap promo.

Each SIM costs about US$2.50 (P140) plus P50 in free load.

"SIM swap activities cause operational chaos. This is why we are putting an end to the SIM swap operations," said Nazareno.

Manuel Pangilinan, chair of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., said the industry should end the SIM swap because it would have been artificially swelling the subscriber pie.

He said the swaps could be generating activity but these have not been churn-free. However, Nazareno said SIM swaps have been incurring negative expenses.

LIFESTYLE

Editor Chris Bona-Formoso

CARROT cake

It's just a sexy piece of cake

THE SEXY CHEF CREW Barni and Rachel Alejandro with pastry chef Nina Navarro

Sexy Chef now offers South Beach Diet desserts

Text by Alice A. Jamiseri
Photos by Roger Carpio

BEFORE up with your boyfriend? Having that niece of the month? Call the Sexy Chef. Finally, you can have your cake, and eat it, too," says Barni Alejandro of Sexy Chef, Metro Manila's first reasonably priced South Beach Diet (SBD) menu, a company she owns and manages with celebrity sister, Rachel Alejandro.

Realizing a dearth in the market for low-calorie, low fat and sugar-free desserts, the health-conscious sisters decided to expand their business by coming out with cookies and pastries that both say don't taste like anything diet. In fact, the sisters enthusiastically say customers wouldn't know the difference between the diet and the "real" thing even if they were blindfolded.

"We do have a chocoholic friend who tests our desserts. If she says it tastes like a diet dessert, we scrap the item," Barni says.

Since Barni already takes care of concocting appetizing SBD menus, and Rachel, the image model of the young company, is busy tending other appointments, both have decided to take on a new "career" in the kitchen. Besides, both admit that as a sexy sister, baking is best left to a pro—and she's a very young and passionate pro at that.

'Sweets' lady

Meet Nina Navarro, Sexy Chef's youthful pastry chef who works till late in the evening to perfect her creation of "sweets" that shouldn't taste anywhere close to healthy—that fat, dull and sawdust like consistency the polish has come to associate with diet desserts. (Since the sisters are still doing the final touches of their new place, both are working in the kitchen of Alejandro's grandmother in Marikina Barni works in the day, and Navarro starts whipping up her ingredients in the evening.

"So much so we needed the expertise of a person who has been working with pastries, we also wanted someone young, someone who has a lot of fresh ideas," says Rachel.

And that's exactly what Navarro brought into the company. She may be a seasoned chef in the world of luscious fudges and fat and sugar dripping rich layers upon layers of rich chocolate, but mixing healthy ingredients for a decent diet dessert is a completely different story.

And doesn't we'll do either. There's already too much of those ordinary pales with sugar-free desserts in the market today. The Alejandros wanted fantastic treats that can satisfy even the picky sweet tooth of diabetics.

"It has been very challenging so far. You have to adjust working with less fat ingredi-

(CONTINUED)

OREO Cheesecake

PEANUT butter and chocolate chip cookies

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BANQUE Embolido from Kyowa Rice Cooker

SWEET and Savory Brisket from Kyowa Slow Cooker

GRILLED Stuffed Tilapia from Kyowa Convection Oven

Fiesta recipes

YOU may opted to remember just one word as you prepare for all the partying this fiesta time:

Kyowa has a rice cooker, slow cooker, electric griller and convection oven, suitable for most of your favorite fiesta dishes:

The Kyowa Rice Cooker does not only cook the rice but can also be used for dimsum and embutido. Or you can use it to do risotto dishes or even rice baked dessert.

If you have Kyowa's Slow Cooker, try making sweet and savory brisket for something different.

Another handy tool to keep around is Kyowa Electric Griller that allows you to cook your meats and seafood anytime.

You can also whip up a number of surprises with your Kyowa Convection Oven like herbs-broiled whole chicken or Grilled Stuffed Tilapia.

Use your Kyowa to do this:

Bangus Embolido

(Use Kyowa Rice Cooker.)

- 1 whole bangus (fillet)
- 1 pc large onion, chopped
- ¼ c raisins
- ½ pc pork boneless cube
- 2 small can fruit cocktail (reduce pineapple, drained
- 1 pc medium red bell pepper, sliced
- 1 pc medium carrot, coarsely grated
- 2 egg
- ½ stalk celery, chopped
- ¼ c flour
- salt
- pepper

Marinate fish in pineapple syrup, ½ tsp. iodized fine salt (or ½ tbsp iodized rock salt) and ¼ tsp pepper for 10 minutes. Drain. Discard marinade.

Chop fish then combine with remaining ingredients. Season with ½ tsp iodized fine salt (or ½ tbsp iodized rock salt) and ¼ tsp pepper. (Yields: 10pc.)

Place in oiled fish mold. Steam in Kyowa Slow Cooker for 45 minutes. Cool. If desired, brown all sides in oil. Slice and serve with ketchup.

Sweet and Savory Brisket

(Use Kyowa Slow Cooker.)

- 2 beef brisket (about 1 kl), cut in half
- ½ c ketchup
- ¼ c ginger jelly
- 2 envelope onion soup mix
- ½ tsp pepper

Place half of the brisket in a Kyowa Slow Cooker.

In a bowl, combine the ketchup, jelly, soup mix and pepper; spread half over meat. Top with the remaining meat and the ketchup mixture.

Cover and cook on low heat from 8 to 10 hours or until meat is tender. Slice brisket. Serve with cooking juice.

Grilled Stuffed Tilapia

(Use Kyowa Convection Oven.)

- 2 to 4 tilapia
- 2 tbsp bottled salt
- 1 tsp black pepper, ground
- ½ c tomato, diced
- ½ c onion, diced
- 1 c mustard cream
- lemon leaves

Blend spices and seasoning. Season fish inside and out. Cover label and marinate for 2 hours inside the chiller.

Combined diced tomatoes, onions and cream cream for stuffing.

Stuff into the marinated fish.

Bind banana leaves.

Wrap stuffed fish in banana leaves.

Tie to secure the wrapper.

Grill wrapper fish until fully cooked or cook in a Kyowa Convection Oven at high heat.

Simple solutions to kitchen problems

DOES the state of your kitchen make you glad or mad? Don't let simple kitchen problems grow into full-blown household crises. Turn kitchen headaches into yahoos with a little help from Glad, the trusted name in kitchen wraps and bags.

Lunch leftovers don't let your family endure the same leftover dishes at breakfast, lunch and dinner. Get creative and transform last night's entrée into tasty new dishes. But first, you have to preserve the flavor of left overs by storing foods like roasted chicken or steamed fish in super strength Glad Aluminum Foil or microwavable Glad Cling Wrap. Then re-use the article by preparing a holiday club sandwich or using the leftovers as empanada filling.

From grilled foods to steamed entrée, Glad makes because experiencing be prepared answers' using Glad products.

Bonifacio Fiesta: Do you notice a sweet odor coming out of your refrigerator? There's cause for alarm when the watermelon turns fishy and your drinking water smells like yesterday's dinner. What you have to do once your meats and seafood is separate Glad Zipper Freezer Bags, and other foodstuffs like Pasta and vegetables in Glad Zipper Storage Bags that keep food fresh longer. These bags seal tightly to prevented from bacteria and contamination, and prevent food odors from mixing in the refrigerator. Glad Zipper Freezer Bags your home a better-smelling one. Only you'll tell what's inside the bag.

Storage trouble: Having trouble keeping food fresh? Refresh your storage with Glad Refrigerator or freezer perishables, prepared foods and leftovers with extra layer of protect saving tight sealing, clear Glad Wrap. Divide large amounts of leftovers in re-small, shallow containers for quick cooling in the refrigerator. Glad Wrap it's perfect for this task because it's available in three sizes. What's more, you can make a neat stack of Glad Wrap in the refrigerator for ease of breaking; these containers are not bottle-they don't break at rear easily.

Messy cleanups: Tired of removing debris from pans and scrubbing grease off your bakeware? Next time, use Glad Bake to line your pan instead of brushing oil or butter on it. Glad Bake ensures no stick cakes and pastries so you never ever have to deal with burnt-on residue during your spare. And it's cost-effective because you can reuse the sheet for another baking purpose!

Trash crash: Greased on by garbage? Take water management seriously so you don't smother and Glad into your living space. Place the day's rubbish in a moisture Glad Kitchen Garbage Bag. There won't be any unpleasant spill-outs because the bag is scratched and is designed to have secure space for trash.

Glad products prolong the storage life of leftover dishes, fresh fruits, vegetables and frozen solids helping homemakers deal with common kitchen problems easily and more efficiently. Durable, convenient and economical, Glad kitchen wraps, bags and containers are available in leading supermarkets nationwide.

No-grill barbecue

ENJOY chicken barbecue anywhere anytime.

Chef Jau Jau de Guzman-Lorenzo and chit-saup recipe exclusively for Lea & Perrins Worcestershire Sauce. You can make your marinade using ingredients found in any kitchen, and you don't need any charcoal.

Enjoy your barbecued chicken even more with the Lea & Perrins Cayenne Dipping Sauce. Just add Lea & Perrins Worcestershire Sauce to your favorite mayonnaise.

Lea & Perrins Worcestershire Sauce is another quality product of HP Foods Ltd. of the United Kingdom. Try other HP products such as HP Barbecue, HP Sauce and HP Chili.

Turbo Barbecued Chicken

- 1 whole chicken, cut into 12-14 pcs (about 2 1/4 kl)
- 2/3 c brown sugar
- ¼ c soy sauce
- 2/3 c tomato catsup
- 1¼ tbsp minced garlic
- 1¼ tbsp Lea & Perrins Worcestershire Sauce
- ¼ c calamansi juice, about 6-8 pcs

Put chicken (lay well) paper towel. Set aside. In a bowl, mix brown sugar, soy sauce, tomato catsup, minced garlic, Lea & Perrins Worcestershire Sauce and calamansi juice. Stir well. Add chicken piece by piece, making sure that each piece is marinated well. Mix well. Cover and leave at room temperature for some time. Before bake at 350°F for 20 to 30 minutes.

Preparation time: 15 minutes
Marination time: 30 minutes
Makes: 6 servings

TURBO Barbecued Chicken

Portuguese, Spanish cooking classes

TREASURES Angeles School of Culinary Arts is conducting the following classes:

May 13—Portuguese Kil (all menu): Clam Soup (or Pic) Pic Chicken, Portuguese Roast Pork with Bacon and Chorizo Stew and Homemade Turnpen Bread, Baked Seafood Portuguese Style, Flan

May 14—Cantonese Seafood: Lechon Manok Adobo Rice Stuffed Lechon Manok, Arbacha, Edamame Baked Lechon Manok with Paella Stuffing, Morning Meal with Quesong Pan' and Kawaya Stuffing, Salt and Pepper Lechon Manok with Sizzling Garlic Chicken Strips with Zapp Butter and Homemade Mayonnaise

May 15—Traditional Fiesta: 3 (all new): Seafood Relleno with Dipping Sauces and Gravy, Pinong Jolo with Homemade Relleno Sauce, Guinataang Alimango sa Bayabas, Fish en Nito, Crispy Lechon Kawali with Sauces, Barbecuing Relleno

May 16—Exotic Servers and Pastas of Spain (all new): Cut Tea Meal with Pork Ribs and Squash, Mapo with Mixed Seafood, Stir Fried Mushrooms, con Arroz

Call 0289094, 4270008, 6035143, 6474744, 8917-6099888

Learn new Japanese recipes

A JAPANESE Cooking Course will be conducted 2-8 p.m., May 17-19, by Maya Kitchen and chef Seiji Kamura.

The course will offer all new recipes like Chicken Made in Sashimi Sauce, Japanese Hamburger Onion Sauce, Mixed Mushroom Omelet, Chicken Rarin with Cheese, Pumpkin Croquette Rice Risotto, Chicken Cream Stew, Stuffed Cabbage with Meat Filli, Ivy Corn Rice, Macaroni Salad, Sweet Chicken Salad, Savory and Sour Pork Japanese Style, Smoked Pork and Cabbage with Miso, Ham and Potato Curry, Steamed Chicken with Cream Sesame Sauce, Japanese Fried Chicken, Japanese Shrimp Salad, Crab Omelet, Creamed Beef with Lettuce Tempura Wrap, Shrimp Mousse Soup Japanese Style, Grilled Tofu with Ground Pork.

Meanwhile, Shortening and Barbending classes will be held 9 a.m.-4 p.m., May 14 and 21. It will cover basic set up, suggestive salting techniques, cutting and heating set, sugito folding and shaving, classifications of knives and spatula, types of gloves, mixing and serving drinks.

Other classes offered are:

Young People's Cook to be held on 11 and up, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., May 18 and 20. Participants will be taught basic cooking and baking techniques including food presentation and styling with edible garnishes. Recipes include Three-Cheese Lasagna, Toasted Ribbon Loaf, Apple Strudel, Cream Cheese Pie, Pumpkin Soup, Tasty Chicken Salad, Creamy Bread Bowl and Butter Rolls.

The Junior Culinary Workshop for boys and girls aged 8 to 13 will be held 8:30 a.m.-12 noon, May 17 and 18. Covered will be hygiene and kitchen and safety in the kitchen, kitchen math, table setting and napkin folding. Recipes include Pineapple Fish Balls, Carbonara Bacon and Cream, Spaghetti Japanese Sandwiches, Banana Nog, Healthy Bonggos, Chocolate Bonbons and Bitter Bean Pork.

Visit the Maya Kitchen (Tuesdays through Saturdays) at the 6/F Liberty Bldg., A. Arnaiz Ave. (Paseo de). Makati City or call 8911185 or 8925811 loc. 108, or e-mail info@mayakitchen.com.ph.

Free cooking demo

SAN MIGUEL Pure Foods Culinary Center invites you to "Learn, Cook and Bake," a free cooking demonstration with chef instructors Michaela Cruz and Anna Park of Cooking Basics Culinary Studio.

Philets your options and learn easy-to-make, easy-to-prepare dishes at 10 for a food festival on May 20, 1-4:30 p.m., at the San Miguel Head Office Cafeteria, 40 San Miguel Ave., Ortigas Center. Mini-cooking (across SM Megamall). Just bring in any three empty assorted varieties of Magnolia, Purefoods Hormel, Magnolia Chicken or Monterey products. Call 6713979 loc. 402, 404, 405 and 2171.

V-LEAGUE PROMO
Shakey's V-League, the first semi-professional all-women's volleyball league in the Philippines, has inspired the V-League bundle. For P565, you get a delicious treat for three and a Shakey's V-League volleyball. Promo is available to all dine-in customers until May 31. Enjoy a double-sized helping of Classic Italian Sausage made with prime ground meat, seasoned with special herbs and spices and prepared the traditional way, absolutely without the use of a tenderizer. The thin crust brick-oven baked pizza is topped with aged cheddar cheese and special tomato sauce, and garnished with red bell peppers and onions. For delivery, dial 5218080.

All-natural fruit cooler

COOL off this summer with Seattle's Best Coffee's newest concoction, the Fruit Javakula. The beverage is 100-percent all-natural fruit, tea and milk, with a healthy blend of Vitamin C and protein and a fruity smoothie texture.

Enjoy Fruit Javakula's five exciting flavors—Strawberry Rave, Mango Tango, Peaches 'n Cream, Strawberry Banana-nana and Wild Berry. They come with fresh fruit skewers.

Visit the nearest Seattle's Best Coffee store and grab a glass of Fruit Javakula.

Meal combo in a tub

POPEYE'S Chicken and Seafood is now offering the meal combo Popeye's Tub.

Eight pieces of chicken are served with four regular signature side dishes (choices of red beans and rice, coleslaw, mashed potato or cajun rice), four pieces of buttermilk biscuits (or rice) and four regular sodas.

A tub filled with five pieces of chicken can be enjoyed with Popeye's Seafood Poppers in small servings of popcorn shrimp and squid rings. Other add-ons are four regular sodas, four cups of seasoned rice and four regular signature side dishes.

The treats cost a budget-friendly P599, for a serving of FIVE.

Popeye's stores is at Greenhills; Robinsons Galleria, Ermita and Metro East; New Pasteurs Plaza Cities; and SM City Pampanga.

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It's just a sexy piece of cake

From page C2

ents. The measurement is different and the consistency is not the same. I have bit and sides of about three times before I can come up with a delicious dessert," Nanette says.

Rigorous test

And that piece of cake still has to go through rigorous taste testing by the Alejandros and their friends. Hit for Nanette, however, it has been a welcome change.

For starters, whole-wheat flour is substituted for the standard flour. Cream cheese, if an item calls for it, must be one-third less fat. The more expensive but natural health-ier sugar substitute, Splenda, is used instead of equivalents.

These three-inch desserts will be sold separately, about P45 per slice. A minimum order of P600 will entitle one for a free delivery—now delivering anywhere within the metropolis.

Three-inch slices are the culinary standard. It also helps prevent sins, says Rachel, from digging out on the whole cake. For special occasions, whole cakes can be ordered. Delivery is within three days after placing an order.

Available for now are carrot cake, cheesecake, chocolate chip cookies, peanut butter cookies and flourless brownies. In the works are apple strips and chocolate cake. Also available are the low-fat, sugar-free steamed cakes and gelatins by Rachel.

Soon, says Rachel, a Sexy Chef cafe will be set up, offering everything and anything sugar-free, low-fat and low-calorie, an alternative to the many dessert resto-cafes.

"Many Filipinos are diabetic, and they are getting younger these days. They can't deprive themselves of sweets for the rest of their lives," Rachel says.

Weight-watchers stand to gain as well. If the sugar-craving sets in, anyone can have his/her dessert while the girth. Moderation, cautions Rachel, is still the key to permanent weight loss. Though a delightful line of desserts, however, Sexy Chef hopes Filipinos won't shudder at the thought of eating healthy.

Call 0917-8XYCHEF (0917-7932433) or 9335258.

E-mail the author at ajandro@inquirer.com.ph

ORIENTAL Noodles with Shrimp

OMELET with Sausage

PAN-SEARED Lapu-Lapu

Fine dining service at 30,000 feet

By Yanga Bago-Reyes

GULF Air has taken onboard dining to new heights.

Its Sky Chef concept, launched recently in the Philippines, allows First class passengers here their gourmet meal in style, the way they would have it in a restaurant on terra firma.

"With Sky Chef, it's like bringing a four-star hotel service up in the sky" proudly says Anders Schultz, Gulf Air manager for in-flight services. Gulf Air is the national carrier of Abu Dhabi, Bahrain and Oman.

A chef will have most of the food pre-cooked—at Muscat Catering Centre in Oman for flights from Manila. Then he or she will be onboard to plate the food for those in First Class, giving each passenger the feeling of more personalized service like in a luxurious hotel or restaurant.

The chef will also move around to get passengers' special requests and try to tailor-fit dishes according to the passenger's preferences. Drinks will be served sans ice medium well, for instance, or eggs benedict without the hollandaise sauce.

To complement the gourmet meals, the Sky Grille also offers a range of vintage wines, from Grand Cru to Emilion to single vineyard Burgundy, as well as deluxe spirits.

Gulf Air is the only mid-haul to airline to serve wine and champagne on board.

For the business class, the chefs will prepare an eight-course menu. Gulf Air has also over 100 onboard chefs.

"This service concept is intended to offer personalized attention and care that will extend our customer's expectations," says Schultz. He adds that, as much as possible, Gulf Air's food service aims to come as close as possible to restaurant—quality dining, able to serve with elegance hot meals at 30,000 feet.

MEXICO Salad with Asparagus, Red Pepper and Parmesan Tuile

Gulf Air gave recently a preview of what was in store for its First Class passengers at the Sofitel Muscat Catering Centre in Oman. It brought its Sky chef Christophe Camadon, who prepared a spread consisting of traditional mid-Eastern fare with European and Asian influences.

Dishes prepared included Pumpkin Soup with Coconut Cream, Char-grilled Sirloin Sandwich with Caramelized Onion, Prawn with Lemongrass on Green Mango Salad, Stir-fried Vegetables with Noodles Nest and Lamb Kofta and Beef Tikka. Desserts included Black Cherry and Apple Charlotte, Arabic Coffee Tiramisu and Pineapple Lime Tartlette.

"Gulf Air is the only airline offering Sky Chef service...and it has won the 30-First (the most prestigious award, giving body to air transport) Best Onboard Food for First Class for two years in a row," says Shultz.

Another privilege enjoyed by First Class and Business Class passengers is Shine on Demand that allows them to choose when they want to have their meal during the flight.

Sky Nanny

The airline also offers to passengers to all services Sky Nanny aimed to make life easier and more enjoyable for travelers with young children, including infants. The Nanny helps families during boarding and disembarkation and gives parents a much-needed break during longer flights.

Children will be kept occupied with in-flight activities and entertainment (the airline offers two dedicated children's channels), hopefully giving time-out also to organized for children so let parents enjoy their own meals.

Schultz says every Sky Nanny is trained to care for children up to the age of 12, whether traveling with their parents or accompanied minors.

Gulf Air flies out of Manila nine times a week to Abu Dhabi, Bahrain and Muscat, with connections to different key cities in the Gulf, Europe and the Mediterranean. Call 8178000.

BLACK Cherry and Apple Charlotte

STIR-FRIED Veggies in Noodle Nest

LAMB Kofta and Beef Tikka

CHARGRILLED Sirloin Sandwich with Caramelized Onion

TRY before you FRY

The Center for Culinary Arts (CCA), Manila is the country's leading and longest running culinary school, having reaped numerous awards including Superbrands 2004 & 2005. This May, the school will hold the **Discovery Course**, an introductory program to its full-time courses:

- Diploma in Culinary Arts and Management
- Diploma in Baking-Pastry Arts and Management

You will get a complete overview including hands-on learning sessions. If you see yourself in this career, you may take one of these full-time courses with our experienced faculty and finish with a Government Accredited Diploma. You may even pursue a Bachelor Degree overseas with our partner schools in Canada and Australia. You will also get a US National Restaurant Association ProStart® Certification, an advantage for work in the USA. Try out a future in culinary arts. Sign up for the Discovery Course at CCA, Manila.

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Center for Culinary Arts, Manila

GULF AIR executives: John Hurtado, marketing manager for Asia Pacific; chef Christophe Camadon; Bahrain Hakeem, area manager for Philippines; Anders Schultz, manager for in-flight services; and Stephen Gervais, Muscat Catering general manager